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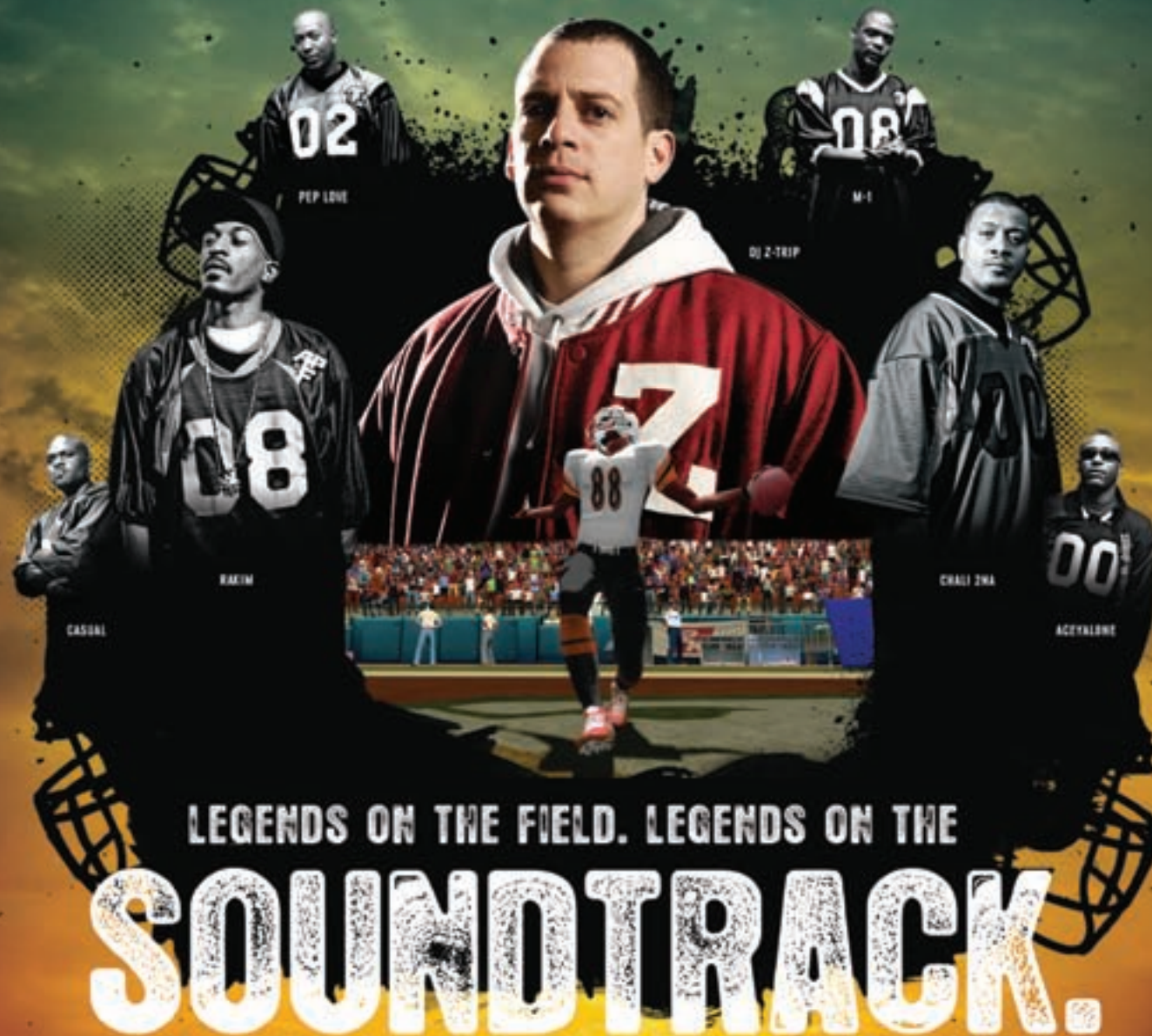


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THIS SUMMER THE LEGEND RETURNS.



PLAYSTATION 3



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ED'S RANT TRIP OUT



One of Cape Town's many mini-bus taxis, which double as mobile sound systems. (South Africa, 2003; photo by Vivian Host)

People go to great lengths to get music they love. Frosty, from eclectic online radio outpost Dublab, recently undertook a nearly 30-hour trip to India—carrying a wig destined for use in the new Wes Anderson movie, *Darjeeling Limited*—just so he could return to a Bollywood record store in Bombay. (Read about it in this issue's "The New World Music" feature, page 64.) Diplo flew on a rickety mail plane to an isolated corner of Australia to produce tracks with aboriginal hip-hop MCs, and Maga Bo tracked down musical co-conspirators in Guyana and Zanzibar.

Back in Los Angeles, Hydra Head label dudes Aaron Turner and Mark Thompson rescued hundreds of Pelican CDs from the back of a burning car, and dudes from reissue labels like Now-Again and Light in the Attic practically did detective work to track down old soul and funk musicians for the purposes of re-licensing their lost classics.

Just think about that the next time you're sitting at home, bummed that the new Arcade Fire album hasn't leaked on LimeWire yet. Or you could just marvel that you have nearly every kind of music at your fingertips, with the net enabling you to watch *kuduro* videos from Angola, Japanese dancehall DJs competing in Jamaica, and teenagers innovating R&B bump 'n' grind in their Alabama bedrooms (check out the videos at www.myspace.com/peerpressure5, and don't blame us when your eyeballs fall out).

Clicking through mountains of information in cyberspace does make one more informed, but it can rob music of the kind of context that really groundbreaking labels provide. Remember when Dischord introduced the world to the D.C. punk scene, and Factory Records provided a peek into the mysterious and moody underbelly of Mancunian dance-rock? From collating the best of Toronto indie rock and techno (like Paper Bag does) to documenting the cheekiest side of French electro-house boom (thanks Institutés!), record labels are still one of the most reliable ways of discovering music—and their role in giving a graphic look and feel to a scene cannot be underestimated. To that end, we had Ersatz Audio owner (and Adult. member) Adam Lee Miller talk to Mute Records founder Daniel Miller, who inspired thousands by taking chances with releases by avant-industrialists like Fad Gadget, Depeche Mode, and Nitzer Ebb.

To make this issue, I basically traveled around the world from behind my desk in Brooklyn. But I'll admit that it did induce a little nostalgia for the days when I mail-ordered Stone Roses 'zines from addresses listed in the back of *Melody Maker* and rode around the Valley in my friend Jarrett's car, listening to his carefully curated mixtapes of Big Black, Nick Drake, and Slug (featuring ex-*XLR8R* editor Tomas Palermo on drums). Not quite as grueling as a trip to Zanzibar, but new music always felt more special when you had to work hard to find it.

—Vivian Host, Editor

STAFF

CREATIVE DIRECTOR

Brianna Pope (brianna.pope@xlr8r.com)

EDITOR

Vivian Host (vivian.host@xlr8r.com)

MANAGING EDITOR

Ken Taylor (ken.taylor@xlr8r.com)

SENIOR DESIGNER

Tim Saputo (tim.saputo@xlr8r.com)

DESIGN AND PRODUCTION

Audrey Kell (audrey.kell@xlr8r.com)

ONLINE MANAGING EDITOR

Jennifer Marston (jennifer.marston@xlr8r.com)

RICH-MEDIA EDITOR

Bryant Rutledge (bryant.rutledge@xlr8r.com)

ONLINE ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Fred Miketa (fred.miketa@xlr8r.com)

SENIOR WRITER

Toph One (redwine@xlr8r.com)

VIDEOGAMES EDITOR

Ryan Rayhill (ryan.rayhill@xlr8r.com)

COPY EDITOR

Frances Reade

EDITORIAL INTERNS

Ross Holland, Cameron Octigan

STAFF WRITERS

Eric K. Arnold, Sarah Bentley, Derek Beres, Nick Chacona, Roy Dank, Martin DeLeon, Matt Earp, Rob Geary, David Hemingway, Max Herman, Ross Hogg, Justin Hopper, Josiah Hughes, Brandon Ivers, David Katz, Jason Leder, Luciana Lopez, Monty Luke, Cameron Macdonald, Robbie Mackey, Fred Miketa, Peter Nicholson, Tomas Palermo, Brion Paul, Brock Phillips, Mark Pytlik, Dave Segal, Jesse Serwer, Evan Shamoon, Philip Sherburne, Rachel Shimp, Patrick Sisson, Scott Thill, Josh Tonnissen, Janet Tzou, Tony Ware, Rico Washington

CONTRIBUTING WRITERS

Aaron Ashley, Marty B, Anna Balkrishna, Tyra Bangs, Blair Carswell, Stacey Dugan, Mike Dunleavy, Derek Grey, Ross Holland, David Katz, James Lee, David Ma, Maga Bo, Steve Marchese, Megan Martin, Piers Martin, James Mayo, Doug Morton, Bruno Natal, Andrew Parks, Alexander Posell, Dusty Saguaro, Eric Smillie, Velanche Stewart, Will Tobin, Roger Thomasson, Dominic Umile

STAFF PHOTOGRAPHERS

Christopher Glancy, Morgan Howland, Paul O'Valle, Dustin Ross, Christopher Woodcock

CONTRIBUTING PHOTOGRAPHERS

Lars Borges, Shiloh Crawford III, Lauren Dukoff, Christopher Franko, Frosty, Vivian Host, Nicola Kuperus, Seth Kushner, Maga Bo, Wesley Pentz, Chrissy Piper, Annie Sloan, Ken Taylor

STAFF ILLUSTRATORS

Chuck Anderson for No Pattern, Derek Morris for Trophy

CONTRIBUTING ILLUSTRATORS

Tristan Ceddia, Paul Darragh, Delicious Design League, Catalina Estrada

ON THE COVER

Labels We Love by Delicious Design League



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CONTRIBUTORS



PAUL DARRAGH

New Zealand-born artist Paul Darragh was most recently an art director in Melbourne, Australia, where he designed magazines, and directed and photographed fashion shoots. For this issue, Paul illustrated our feature on the new strain of world music. Paul moved to New York in August to embody the American dream with a Kiwi accent. His freelance illustrations have been featured in publications around the world, including *XLR8R*, *Beautiful/Decay*, *Pulp*, and *Blowback*.

www.bemodern.org



MAGA BO

Maga Bo is a DJ/producer who works within an international collision of styles, sounds, location recordings, and beats that have yet to be classified. A study in the digital contortions of hip-hop, ragga, breakbeat, and jungle/drum & bass, Maga Bo's sound is a divine (s)mash-up of *batucada*, *rai*, *capoeira*, *bhanga*, and skewed electronic beats, all of which inform the Rio de Janeiro-based producer's writing in this month's new world music feature.

www.magabo.com



DELICIOUS DESIGN LEAGUE

Delicious Design League is Billy Baumann (right) and Jason Teegarden-Downs, a two-man duo from Chicago that specializes in graphic design and illustration for the music industry. Mostly recognized for their limited-edition hand-screenprinted music posters, they've done work for everyone from *Jane* magazine to Live Nation, and created posters and CD artwork for artists like Pelican and Ben Kweller. The pair designed this month's cover and the art for our special Labels We Love feature.

www.deliciousdesignleague.com



ANNIE SLOAN & MARK "FROSTY" McNEILL

Annie Sloan and Mark "Frosty" McNeill spent last winter seeking out shining sounds in India. The musical fruits of their field recordings and record digging can be found online at www.dublab.com. Their Bollywood dance video has hopefully been destroyed forever. Friends for over a decade, these musical nomads are both deeply involved with creative cultural action. They've lived and worked in a combined eight countries and have had enough chai to last a lifetime.

www.dublab.com

STAFF

PUBLISHER/EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Andrew Smith (andrew.smith@xlr8r.com)

ASSOCIATE PUBLISHER

Roy Dank (roy.dank@xlr8r.com)

WEST COAST ADVERTISING SALES

Kelsey Guntharp (kelsey.guntharp@xlr8r.com)

EAST COAST ADVERTISING SALES

Ethan Holben (ethan.holben@xlr8r.com)

MARKETING AND SPECIAL PROJECTS MANAGER

Kerry McLaughlin (kerry.mclaughlin@xlr8r.com)

ACCOUNTING MANAGER

Jamie Kochan (jamie.kochan@xlr8r.com)

CIRCULATION MANAGER

Jennifer Marston (jennifer.marston@xlr8r.com)

SUBSCRIPTIONS

Fred Miketa (subscribe@xlr8r.com)

OPERATIONS CONSULTANT

Michael Prommer

CO-PUBLISHER

Arias Hung

ADVERTISING:

Dial 415.861.7583, fax 415.861.7584, email advertising@xlr8r.com, or mail XLR8R Magazine, 1388 Haight St. #105, San Francisco, CA 94117.

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CIRCULATION:

Newsstand distribution through Curtis Circulation. For direct retail sales, Jennifer Marston at 415.861.7583 x226 or jennifer.marston@xlr8r.com.

CONTACT US:

San Francisco Main HQ: 1388 Haight St. #105, San Francisco, CA 94117;
New York Office: 350 Seventh Ave. #1504, New York, NY 10001;
letterbox@xlr8r.com, fax 415.861.7584

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Got something to say? Love us? Hate us? Write us at letterbox@xlr8r.com or send mail to XLR8R Magazine, 1388 Haight Street #105, San Francisco CA 94117.



May Issue #107

June/July Issue #108

Dude Rant

I really loved your piece on Devin the Dude [June/July #108; "To Put It Bluntly"]. I've been feeling his steez for years and it's nice to see a non-hip-hop mag giving him some much-deserved love.

Thanks!

James Keenan, via the web

Bitter Pill

I'm just writing to say that even though sometimes I think your BJ "Bitter" Bastard page is funny, why does it always have to be so mean-spirited. Whatever bastard writes it would do well to take a chill pill.

Sincerely,

Johann Dijkers, via the web

Haile Recommended

XLR8Rers... Every month you bring some rad stuff into my life, but I'm missing the big reggae and dancehall features that you were so hip to lately. Fucking killed it with the Sizzla story [March #105] a while back. I need more!

Anonymous, via the web

World of Hate

Is there some reason you think world music is cool? I just don't see the line between Monika Records and running a review of Balkan Beat Box right underneath it. No offense, but Berkeley/

Portland hippies and their undying love for the shittiest of world beats (and their trustafarian dreads and insulting head-wraps) make me puke blood, and it'd be cool if you'd stop marching to that shirtless-white-dude drummer too.

Mason, via the web

Ken responds:

While the world of "world music" may be an amorphous, lute-and-conga-speckled blob, we still do our best to pick around the crap and only pick up on the good stuff. Hopefully, after you check out this month's feature on the new wave of world music, you'll be singing a different tune.

Mission to Mars

The illustration and design in XLR8R is always pretty amazing, but the Mars-1 feature last month [May #107; "Vis-Ed"] nearly made me weep. Pure talent. Keep it up.

ZeeBoss, via the web



XLR8R'S "SUMMER SWEAT" CONTEST

Win music, books, and seaside goodies from Havaianas, Minus, and Gingko Press.

By this time, the summer heat has invaded even the cool climes of San Francisco, and as we sit drenched in sweat at XLR8R HQ, we dream of bike rides down to Ocean Beach and chilling out before the inevitable fog rolls in. It's probably pretty hot in your neck of the woods too, so we've teamed up with our friends Havaianas, Minus, and Gingko Press to bring you some of the summer's hottest wares. For this month's contest, **Havaianas**, the world-famous Brazilian sandal-maker, is throwing in two pair of their buttery-soft rubber flip-flops, which you can take to the beach with **Minus'** special summer prize pack, which includes a limited-edition Minus bag and beach towel, t-shirt, and a copy of the label's brand new *Nothing Much* compilation, which scored high marks in this month's reviews section. To top it off, **Gingko Press** offers up its gorgeous *Icepick: Icelandic Street Art* coffee-table book.

All you've gotta do to win is tell us, in under 200 words, what's making you sweat this summer. The most creative answers win the prizes below.

ONE FEMALE AND ONE MALE WINNER RECEIVE: A pair of Havaianas flip-flops, the Minus prize pack, and a copy of *Icepick: Icelandic Street Art*.

ONE RUNNER-UP RECEIVES: A copy of *Icepick: Icelandic Street Art*.

Entries will be accepted via standard mail and email. Entries must be received by August 28, 2007. Send your answers to XLR8R's "Summer Sweat" Contest, 1388 Haight St. #105, San Francisco, CA 94117 or email contest@xlr8r.com with "XLR8R's Summer Sweat Contest" in the subject line.

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tie it together.



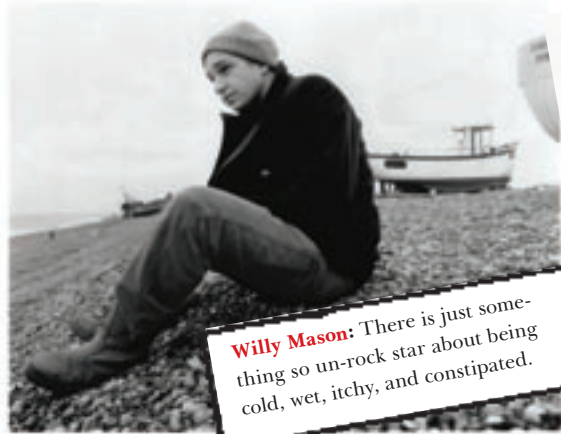
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BJ "BITTER" BASTARD'S WORST PROMO GLOSSIES

Flickr and Last Night's Party just can't compete with this embarrassing batch of horrible, glossy promo pictures that clog BJ's mailbox month in, month out. (Keep in mind that these are intended to *actually promote* the artists in the pictures.)



Willy Mason: There is just something so un-rock star about being cold, wet, itchy, and constipated.

Willy Mason

Rainman: This would be cool if Rainman A) wasn't wearing an airbrushed tee, and B) didn't remind me of a movie featuring both autism and Tom Cruise. Actually, there's nothing cool about this.

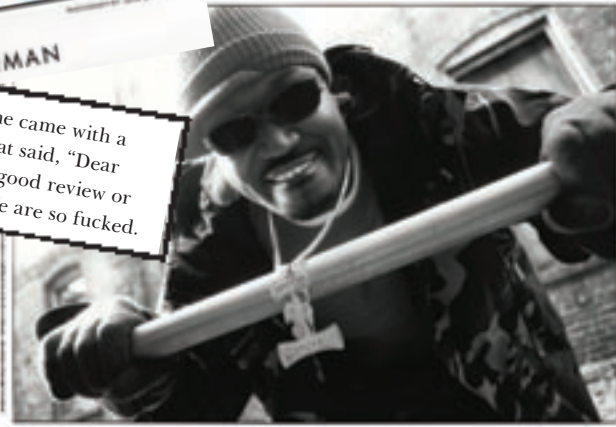


Timbaland: Inside the mind of a genius: Step 1) Create loop. Step 2) Climax.



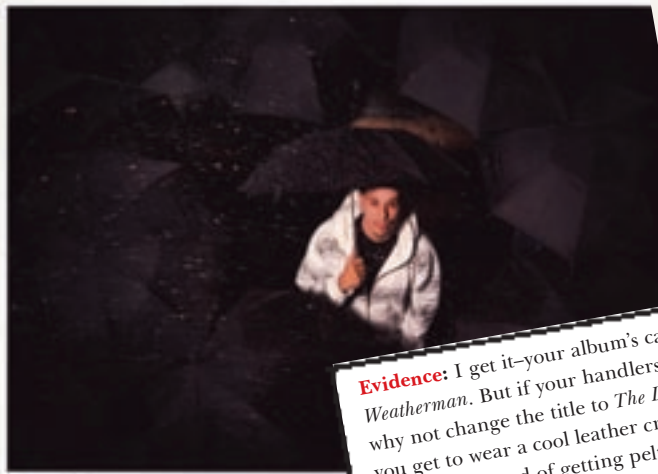
TIMBALAND

Project Pat: This one came with a handwritten note that said, "Dear XLR8R, writes me a good review or I'll breaks ya teef." We are so fucked.



PROJECT PAT

Evidence: I get it—your album's called *The Weatherman*. But if your handlers like it so literal, why not change the title to *The Leatherman*, so you get to wear a cool leather crime-fighting body suit instead of getting pelted by fake rain?



Evidence

Yoko Ono: I bet when Sean Lennon's friends are like, "Dude, your mom's 74-year-old boobs are hot," he rolls his eyes and is like, "Man... it's all part of the game."



YOKO ONO

Kaptain Nemo: It wasn't funny when The Detroit Grand Pubahs did it. Still ain't.



KAPTAIN NEMO

Lek: Ever heard of a little something called Orientalism? It's when a dude from New Jersey goes to India and takes a picture with a Saddhu while wearing a "Save the Amazon" t-shirt, smoking a cig, a doing the "what-what" dance.



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Words Fred Miketa
Illustration NoPattern

KATHY DIAMOND

A LONDON VOCALIST RESUSCITATES VINTAGE DISCO AND EARNS HER DIVA STRIPES.

“Diva” is an overused and grotesque word. It conjures images of an incessantly expanding Mariah Carey, and lurid Ibiza enthusiasts ripe with passion for all things “glam.” Quite frankly, it makes this writer slightly uncomfortable even typing it. Yet it’s the most apt term for a female vocalist with as much soul as Kathy Diamond.

The London-based, Sheffield-raised disco funkstress has been crafting her dynamic vision since 1993, releasing vocal-house twelves on her own dime via white labels. But Diamond’s dance potential has been elevated with her first long-player, composed by production powerhouse Maurice Fulton. “I met Maurice through my friend Nesreen [better known as Modal artist and fellow Fulton contributor Bibi]. She’s a fine singer!” exclaims Diamond via email. “Nesreen told Maurice about me, he called, I started writing songs to a couple of his instrumentals, and that’s how it started.” The duo crafted the 2003 “Sunshine” single (on Cottage), which eventually segued into her first LP, *Miss Diamond to You*.

Stirring together an amalgam of subtle slap-bass leads, cosmic synth

waves, and vintage soul vocals, Diamond’s debut long-player brims with a childhood spent listening to old soul and disco. “It was a very exciting moment in our house when my mum got *The Best of Donna Summer*. She fell out with her sister because it came under question who actually owned [the record]. My Aunt Mandy put her name on it and my mum lost the will to live,” Diamond recalls. “It could have been an original disco-related death!”

Though her talent for writing soulful love songs was always evident, the desire to make glittery dancefloor gems didn’t strike right away. “I’ve always been a bit of a drama queen but didn’t get into making disco music until later on. I preferred dancing to it with my mum in the living room and dressing up,” says Diamond. “But my love for real songs kept me writing, along with a couple of rubbish boyfriends, and some very inspiring late nights out!”

With tracks like “All Woman” and “I Need You Here Right Now,” Diamond is at once dominating and vulnerable, sensual and innocent, which always makes for an interesting disco heater. “The perfect disco record for me has the backbone of a real song—it’s hooky as fuck and has the biggest ass-whipping bassline you’ve ever heard!” Diamond asserts. “Maurice has delivered my favorite slap-bass ever. When it kicks in during ‘All Woman,’ I get a massive rush! I love it!”

Kathy Diamond’s *Miss Diamond to You* is out now on Permanent Vacation. www.myspace.com/kathydiamond, www.perm-vac.com





FIVE STAR: ULRICH SCHNAUSS

The master of textures and layers lists his shoegaze classics.

To make his latest album, *Goodbye* (Domino), Ulrich Schnauss temporarily departed his home in London for his birthplace: Kiel, Germany. There he came face to face with tranquility and loneliness, plus the spectre of his tormented teenage years, leading him to make a record that fulfills the mission set forth on 2003's *A Strangely Isolated Place*: to create a modern update of the early '90s British shoegaze sound.

Schnauss has been influenced by My Bloody Valentine and Cocteau Twins, but when we asked for his favorite shoegaze albums, he was careful to highlight the genre's less obvious masterpieces.

Vivian Host
www.ulrich-schnauss.com



1. CHAPTERHOUSE BLOOD MUSIC (DEDICATED)

One of my favorite albums of all time. It's very underrated, but if it came out three years earlier or three years later it probably would have been very acclaimed. It fuses electronic dance and indie elements. You can hear loads of different ideas clashing.



2. MAHOGANY CONNECTIVITY (DARLA)

Mahogany takes influence from Cocteau Twins and Slowdive and does something new with it. Their first album was also really important to me as it came out at a time when dance was on the decline, it was the last days of Brit Pop, and I was really frustrated with new music.



3. LUSH SPOOKY (4AD)

A Lush record should definitely be mentioned. This was their first proper studio album. (*Gala* was more like a compilation). It's a great combination of two very great talents: Emma Anderson's songwriting and Robin Guthrie from Cocteau Twins' production.



4. ELIKA ELIKA (THIS QUIET ARMY)

One of my favorite records of last year, from a Brooklyn band on a small Canadian label. It combines shoegazing influences but moves into electronica territory. It's got a lot more synths on it than guitars but that aesthetic is present.



5. SLOWDIVE SOUVLAKI (CREATION)

An obvious choice but it's such a great album with so many great songs. In the production credits it says, "Mixed, produced, and flanged by Neil Halstead and Chris Hufford," which gives you an idea of the sound. It's equally strong on a songwriting level and a soundscaping level.



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VARIOUS ARTISTS KITSUNE Maison 4

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KITSUNE



JUNIOR SENIOR Hey Hey My My Yo Yo

Junior Senior is 'back on track for the big comeback' with their long-awaited new release. Features 'Can I Get Get Get' and 'Take My Time'. Includes bonus tracks galore!

RYKODISC



65DAYSOFSTATIC The Destruction of Small Ideas

Drum-machine infused post-rock group that's been described as 'Aphex Twin meets Mogwai' and 'the perfect hybrid of Pelican, Explosions in the Sky and DJ Shadow.'

MONOTREME



BURIAL Burial

This first album on KID0E9's Hyperdub label, Burial carves out a sound which sends the dormant slinky syncopations of UK garage, via radio interference, into a padded cell of cushioned, muffled bass.

HYPERDUB



JUSTICE †

Justice's monster beats, massive hooks, thunderous drums, and near-religious determination to demolish dance floors cast them in a light no contemporary can catch.

ED BANGER / BECAUSE / VICE



DATAROCK Datarock

Datarock combine post-punk with disco-tinged techno to create a non-stop dance party. The album, which was previously released in Norway, contains new tracks along with three music videos.

NETTWERK



VARIOUS ARTISTS 5 Years Get Physical

Five years on, Get Physical has grown and evolved into one of the globe's top dance labels. This comp recaps the label's history with tracks by Booka Shade, DJ T, M.A.N.D.Y., and more!

GET PHYSICAL



KAVINSKY 1986 EP

1986 is the year Kavinsky mysteriously crashed his Testarossa. 1986 is also the year he eventually came back to life as a living dead. With Sebastian (Ed Banger) remix!

RECORD MAKERS

WWW.INSOUND.COM



Words Mosi Reeves
Photo Theo Jemison

SAMIYAM

A NONCHALANT ELECTRO PHENOM TAKES IT ONE DAY AT A TIME.

"I don't try to let anything go to my head," says Sam Baker in an unassuming tone. Over the phone at least, the 23-year-old from Ann Arbor, MI sounds like a stoner kid who sits around all day surfing the internet and making hip-hop beats. Even his artist name, Samiyam, connotes pure slackerdom.

In reality, Samiyam is flying out to Los Angeles—where he will move a scant month after this interview—to hang out with his friend Flying Lotus. The Warp-affiliated beat composer is a mentor to Samiyam; in February, he took the young producer to Amsterdam. "It was the first show I've ever done and it was in Amsterdam. It was pretty wild, man," says Baker. The two perform together as FlyAmSam, a hard-hitting collaboration similar to Arnold Schwarzenegger and Carl Weathers in *Predator*. They dropped "Green Tea Power" on the recent *Beat Dimensions Vol. 1* compilation, and may complete an album for release by the end of the year.

How does an anonymous bedroom producer without so much as an iTunes EP to his credit get jockeyed by the cream of L.A.'s underground producers? Samiyam met Flying Lotus through his MySpace page, right before the latter became a sensation with his 1983 debut last year. In fact, as of this writing, Samiyam's career is mostly confined to the World Wide Web. "It's cool," he says, laughing at the suggestion that he's a MySpace star. "It definitely helps motivate me a little bit to get messages from people saying how much they like the songs."

Samiyam pounds out his beats on the SP-303, creating instrumental tracks that click and stutter like scratchy vinyl at half speed. He even samples tracks from classic Nintendo videogames like *Metroid*, *Spy Hunter*, and *Legend of Zelda*, adding mono-synth melodies to his drunken-sounding beatscapes.

"A thrilling sound to break the sameness," raves Daedelus, via email, about Samiyam's emergence. "He's a new voice, thank goodness. So far, from the sounds I've heard, he has channeled a lot of the energy of classic electro, but with a deliberate slower pacing, which I believe is rare from a producer so young."

Baker's modest online beginning hasn't kept tastemaker DJs like Benji B and Andrew Meza from hitting him up for tracks, which he happily supplies. Despite the growing buzz, however, Samiyam remains noncommittal. He might compile a solo CD of instrumentals and unofficial remixes to sell on his MySpace page. He might pursue a full-fledged music career. But it's all up in the air.

"I'm not worried about signing deals or anything when I don't even have a record done," admits Samiyam. "At this point, I've just got a bunch of beats. I don't really have a project. It makes the most sense to worry about completing a project that I would like to see released."

www.myspace.com/samiyambeats

DILATED PEOPLES



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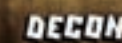
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WHAT IS IT?: YACHT ROCK

Where Michael McDonald and Kenny Loggins are kings among men and music better be smooth.

It's music that's peaceful enough to make a dental drill feel like a mother's kiss on a bruise; or, some say, just another smiley face pinned over the dreadful malaise of Carter's America. For DJ Shaun Slaughter (shown left in the captain's hat), yacht rock was just a way to baffle drunken New York hipsters. A year ago, Slaughter began ending his electro-punk sets with numbers like The Doobie Brothers' falsetto-happy 1978 hit "What A Fool Believes." "At first, the reaction was, 'Why the hell would you play this?'" Now you play it and people freak out," he says.

Yacht rock was born around 1976 when prog-rock refugees and SoCal singer-songwriters began to fuse blue-eyed soul, lite-funk, lite-jazz, soft rock, and hazy synths into soundtracks for bearded Huntington Beach-harbor yuppies. Some of the genre's shining examples are Kenny Loggins' *Caddyshack* theme, "I'm Alright," Christopher Cross' wedding standard "Sailing," and the hair salon-friendly world music of Toto's "Africa." "It's an easygoing vibe and not very deep lyrics," says yacht rock aficionado Kurt Uenala of the drums 'n' keytar duo Kap10Kurt (shown above). "I appreciate the production of it—it's the opposite of raw, the opposite of rock and roll."

As white-bred as yacht songs may be, many of them ended up being sampled in hip-hop tracks, most notoriously the

piece of Michael McDonald's "I Keep Forgettin'" that anchored Warren G's G-funk classic, "Regulate." This has, in turn, inspired indie hip-hop producers like Andrew "Anvil" Cohn. His debut album, *New Music for Virtuosos* (Fingerprint), consists entirely of yacht-christened hip-hop instrumentals. "[Yacht rock] has got a real sense of humor to it [and] that was the [kind of] record I wanted to make," says Cohn.

Two decades after the music faded away, nostalgia for its high camp fueled Channel 101.com's online sitcom *Yacht Rock*, which quickly developed a cult following. In the mockumentary, slapstick meets historical revisionism: Steely Dan assaults The Eagles with bats, Michael Jackson declares he will ruin "smooth music" for a decade.

The show inspired Sacramento, CA native Slaughter to hold a "yacht rock" party last year—droves came in polos, and one partier wore nothing but a Speedo and a life jacket. "Some people like [the music] because it's kitschy and funny, but it's also just good," says Slaughter. *Cameron Macdonald*

Illustration by Trophy
www.yachtrack.com, www.kap10kurt.com, www.myspace.com/oneman80sband, shaunslaughter.blogspot.com



ARCHITECTURE IN HELSINKI

A NOISE-POP COLLECTIVE MAKES BIG NOISE FROM AUSTRALIA TO MALAYSIA.

"We started out as a super-quiet band playing a lot of theaters, and we'd freak out when everyone was talking over us," Architecture in Helsinki's founder Cameron Bird explains via cell phone from London. "We naturally got louder because we wanted to be heard."

But the excess of energy on *Places Like This*—the group's third, and much more rowdy, full-length—can also be attributed to Bird's recent protein high. "I started eating meat after being a vegetarian for nine years," he dryly admits. "Any vegetarians out there who are thinking about making the change, I highly recommend it."

A lot has changed for this Australian noise-pop collective since they released their finicky debut, *Fingers Crossed*, in 2003. Their sophomore release, 2005's *In Case We Die*, was critically lauded for its seamless blend of synth-heavy indie-pop and laid-back reggae. The record launched them into the spotlight, prompting numerous world tours and an expanding fan base. Now, with the release of *Places Like This*, the group is bigger than ever. "It's grown so gradually because we've never had major-label backing or shitloads of money to spend on videos," Bird tells me. "We've busted our asses touring, and it's been really satisfying."

Their busy schedule has brought them everywhere from Barcelona's Primavera

Sound festival to a rare show in Malaysia, a country that had, at one time, banned rock shows altogether. "[We played at] this super-futuristic nightclub in the middle of Malaysia, where the big techno dudes like John Digweed or Carl Cox usually play," he explains, "We could've gone out and played one song for two hours and they still would've gone insane. It was really humbling."

With so much time spent on the road, managing their friendships has gotten easier. "We've become really aware of each other's mannerisms," says Bird. "Chances are that there's usually one of us who's having a shit time, but we get along really well. We don't have to avoid eye contact."

With more touring and an inevitable press frenzy following the release of *Places Like This*, the group will not be slowing down anytime soon. "We really want to perfect what we're doing at the moment before we move on to the next chapter," he says. Regardless, Bird's mind never strays from the next project. "It might be hardcore techno, or it might be a 48-piece folk record. If we ever did the same thing twice, the band would be over."

Architecture in Helsinki's *Places Like This* is out now on Polyvinyl Records. www.architectureinhelsinki.net, www.polyvinylrecords.com



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GOOD STUFF

A few of Pete Leonard from King Stampede's favorite things.

NYC's King Stampede brand is such a big name in streetwear, you might think they rock hip-hop all day every day. Wrong! Creative Director Pete Leonard, 32, is a disco DJ fiend and a huge Deadhead—put it this way: When we asked him to pick his favorite Grateful Dead song, he could only narrow it down to seven. (You'll see the hippie vibes creep into KS t-shirts like the Dashiki print and one with a trippy-looking graphic of Beatle George Harrison.) Inspiration also comes from party-and-bullshittin' around Brooklyn, and hanging out at the crew's Boundless NYC streetwear store, started by King Stampede owner Nick Langella. We tracked Leonard down in Boundless' back room and asked him what products are really twisting his melon. *Tyra Bangs* www.kingstampede.com



1



2



3

1. PHIL FROST X SHUT SKATE DECK (\$59.99)

Shut changed everything for skating in the mid-to-late '80s. My friends and I were so on the nuts we ordered uncut blanks from Westwood Cycle and started our own team, called "SWEAT." I discovered Phil Frost's painting around 1994 and immediately fell in love with it. It makes sense and puts me at ease; at the same time, I get really stoked. As much as I want to skate these boards, I'm keeping them on the wall. www.shutnyc.com

2. WEOQEM BOOK BY P.A.M. & EYE YAMATSUKA (\$18)

Eye's wild-style artwork gets me so open, and Perks and Mini bring the most beautiful noise every time. I gave this book to someone as a gift and somehow it's still on my desk; don't know if that's my fault or if my boy Jimmy just wasn't into it. www.perksandmini.com

3. UREI 1620LE ROTARY MIXER

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DJ C

BOSTON'S ORIGINAL ARTCORE JUNGLIST PULLS UP HIS ROOTS AND COMES FULL CIRCLE.

DJ C is a man on the move. For the past 10 years, Jake Trussell has been a pivotal figure in Boston's electronic music scene, organizing parties, hosting club nights, and spinning a riotous mix of jungle, ragga, hip-hop, dancehall, dubstep, bhangra, and '80s pop. This June saw the release of DJ C's long-awaited first full-length, the formidably enjoyable *Sonic Weapons*. This summer also saw the Boston native move to Chicago on a mission to introduce third-coasters to the hyper-hyphenated style he's dubbed "Boston bounce."

"Boston bounce began as an experiment in artificial insemination," he explains slyly. "I was wondering why Boston didn't have its own dance music 'sound' like many other cities do. My theory was that it had to do with the provincial/puritanical repression that's left over in the so-called liberal state from back in the olden days. Those parties in the streets of Kingston and the Bronx, and in the abandoned warehouses and fields in the UK weren't legal, but they were tolerated. Unfortunately, Boston is not so tolerant. We were forced to create our culture in the Beat Research laboratories."

At their long-running Monday night weekly, also called Beat Research, Trussell and his longtime co-conspirator Anthony Flackett (DJ Flack) have conjured all manner of sonic alchemy. But this is nothing new for Trussell. From his earliest musical experiments as a teenager in the northern suburbs of Boston, Trussell has embraced a dizzying variety of styles, using turntables to sample Ravi Shankar and Frank Zappa records into four-track recordings, and regaling house parties with sets heavy on reggae and techno.

He moved to Boston during the heyday of rave and jungle, and became a founding member of the influential artcore junglist collective Toneburst (the same group that nurtured DJ /rupture). As part of Toneburst, Trussell organized large anti-raves and art happenings around Boston that aimed to explode stagnant musical categories—an approach he describes as "extreme culture-blending."

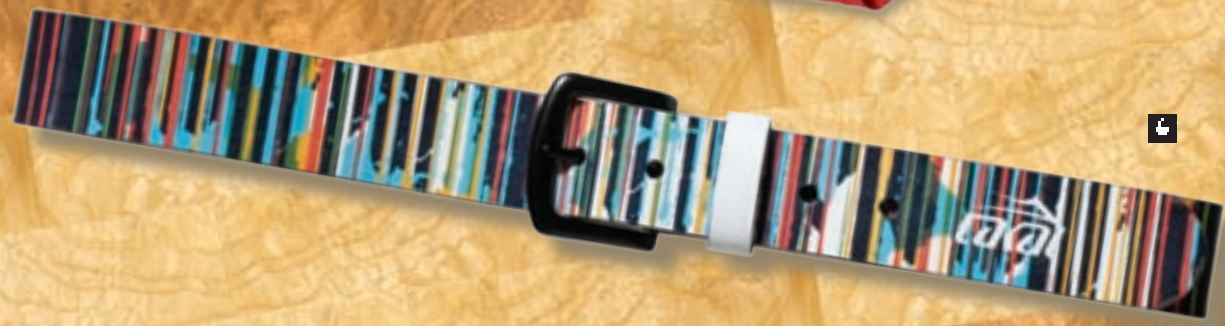
Fuelled by recent changes in technology (DJ software like Serato and Final Scratch, MP3 blogs, MySpace), the radical eclecticism that is Trussell's bread and butter is making a comeback. "It's changed a huge amount just in the last year," Trussell says of DJing. "I think there's a huge amount of potential, because it frees things up, encouraging DJs to mix all different styles together." These changes, which he describes as a "seismic shift," have not only spurred his own creativity (there's a lot of tracks in the DJ C pipeline), but have also led Trussell to make changes to his heretofore ragga jungle-based Mashit imprint. "I'm really excited about the re-launch of Mashit, which will expand across genres (more like my DJ style) and cater to the (more digital) way DJs work today."

DJ C's *Sonic Weapons* is out now on Wimm Recordings. www.dj-c.com

Words: Susanna Belle
Illustration: Tristan Ceddia



AGAINST
THE GRAIN



1. Super 8 Sampler Camera by Lomo
\$85; www.lomography.com

2. Ziggy Hat by Milkcrate
\$40; www.turntablelab.com

3. Rings by Brickwall
2x1 \$75, 2x2 \$80;
www.giantrobot.com

4. Belmont Royal Shoe by Lakai
\$46; www.lakai.com

5. Stashpack Serato Bag by Headliner
\$125; www.turntablelab.com

6. Noize Belt by Lakai
\$15; www.lakai.com

7. Fist Of Fury Shirt by MHI
\$156; www.emaharishi.com

9. Merrell Union Coat
\$350; www.merrell.com

10. Bronze Mixtape Necklace by Alex and Chloe
\$54; www.alexandchloe.com

ECHO EFFECTS

House godfather François K champions the UK dubstep sound.

One typically associates François Kevorkian with the soulful deep house of his Wave Music label or the eclectic disco and Afro-Latin sounds commonly heard at his long-running (but now defunct) Body & Soul event. But in the last year or two, the haunting, stripped-down soundscapes of UK dubstep have grabbed the attention of this NYC house torchbearer.

Kevorkian has been championing the genre at his four-year-old Monday night event, Deep Space, which is dedicated to the celebration of dub in all its various incarnations. Kevorkian can often be found creating dub edits live behind the mixing board at the party, which has hosted the likes of Theo Parrish, Rhythm & Sound, Ursula Rucker, and Stacey Pullen.

"Dubstep really fits what we're doing at Deep Space," says Kevorkian. "It's a very 'now and tomorrow' kind of sound. There's a starkness that's really futuristic. It doesn't have layers and layers of different elements—it's really raw and to-the-core and down to the essence of what the rhythm and the really beefy bass is about. When I play dubstep for people who are confirmed reggae fanatics, they get it right away. There's a point of reference that's so unmistakable."

This isn't to say Deep Space is the only party championing dubstep in NYC—Dave Q's ballistic Dub War night has brought in myriad heavy-hitters, and the genre can often be heard at Brooklyn Beats' Pure Fire night. But Deep Space is notable for delivering dubstep to a completely unsuspecting audience outside the realm of drum & bass or IDM heads.

"Dubstep is the first time in many years that someone has really connected the dots between the incredible dub of the Lee Perry and King Tubby times and today's advanced technological aesthetic," says Kevorkian, who is working on a record with Mala from Digital Mystikz. "I've rarely seen so much enthusiasm for a new genre [at Deep Space] and it's caught on like wildfire. People start screaming when they hear the bass." *Vivian Host*

www.deepspacenyc.com

François K's Dubstep Top 10

- Skream** "Warning" D1 Remix (*Tempa*)
- N-Type** "Street Justice" (*3.5 Records*)
- Loefah** "Disco Rekah" (*Medi Musik*)
- Mala** "Bury Da Bwoy" (*DMZ*)
- Appleblim** "Vansan" (*Skull Disco*)
- Massive Music** "Find My Way" Kode 9 Remix (*Hyperdub*)
- Digital Mystikz** "Wait" (*Soul Jazz*)
- François K and Mala** "Untitled" (*Deep Space Media*)
- Obeah** "Copenhagen Massive" (*Kraken*)
- Juju** "Punks" (*Narco.Hz*)



THE ACE OF CLUBS
(LUKE VIBERT)
BENEFIST CD/2LP

Luke Vibert (Kerrier District, Amen Andrews, Plug, Wagon Christ) returns as **The Ace of Clubs**, a previously dormant alias revived for this new collection of dancefloor bombs on Belgium's First Cask imprint. Experience the magic and accident of classic acid, Vibert-style.

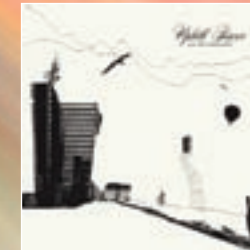
FIRST CASK



VLADISLAV DELAY
MULTILA CD

A timeless ambient-techno masterpiece originally released on the legendary Chain Reaction label in 2000 and mastered by **Moritz von Oswald**, *Multila's* bottomless rhythms and ghost voices cemented **Vladislav Delay's** reputation as a techno visionary. Truly a landmark reissue.

KULMINAZ



UPHILL RACER
YOU WILL UNDERSTAND CD

Germany's **Uphill Racer** (Oliver Lichtl) returns with his sophomore release. He has been called a one-man chamber orchestra, and with *You Will Understand's* fantastic songs, comparisons to **Badly Drawn Boy**, **Beck**, **The Notwist** and **Thom Yorke** are completely justified.

NEOMOTON



D*IRT*Y
DIRTY SPACE DISCO CD

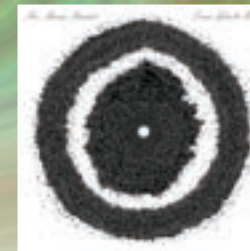
After 3 killer mix CDs (e.g. *Dirty Diamonds*) and playing their DJ-not-DJ sets all over the world, **D*IRT*Y** return with a new thematic compilation series. Their mission: to further destroy musical boundaries. Tracks by **Roedelius**, **Clara Mondshine**, **Sylvester** and more. Cosmic disco!



DJ C
SONIC WEAPONS CD

Riddim scholar, ragga scientist and remixer of artists from M.I.A. to **Gregory Isaacs**, Boston's **DJ C** drops his full-length debut, *Sonic Weapons*. Straddling dancehall, grime, crunk and dubstep, these sonic weapons have been designed to kill sound-systems and destroy dancefloors.

WAVE



PRINS THOMAS
PRINS THOMAS PRESENTS
COSMO GALACTIC PRISM 2CD

Norway's **Prins Thomas**, the King of Space Disco, presents his mix CD magnum opus. Across 36 tracks, we get avant-dance grooves, psychedelic fusion, twisted funk and classic techno; **Joe Meek** & **Carl Craig** to **Parliament** & **Hawkwind**. Truly groovy & demented!



SORCERER
WHITE MAGIC CD

White Magic is the debut full-length from the Bay Area's **Sorcerer** (**Daniel Judd**), who delivers an '80s electro-pop, disco, psychedelia, Krautrock influenced masterpiece comparable to **Lindström**, **Metro Area**, and **Quiet Village**. Sounds that inspire memories of warm days and feeling free.

TIRK



BLAINE L. REININGER
GLOSSOLALIA CD

The first solo album since 1999 from **Tuxedomoon** co-founder, **Blaine L. Reininger**. *Glossolalia* is a record of all of the places and people Blaine has encountered in the last ten years — a musical journey that is magic for the ears.

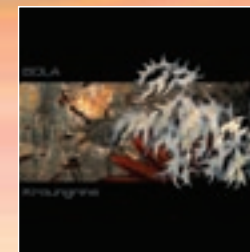
Off



ZELIENOPLÉ
HIS/HERS CD/LP

Chicago's **Zeliénople**, holed up in a desolate suburban basement, unleash their fifth full-length, a monster known as *His/Hers*. Residing in a hazy drunken world somewhere between **Low**, **Boris** and **Dead Man-era Neil Young**, this is a breathtaking psych-rock blow-out.

Type



BOLA
KRAUNGRINE CD

Since 1995, Manchester's **Bola** (**Darrell Fitton**) has been releasing his unique "analog soul" records on Skam, where he is the top-selling artist. *Kraungrine* is his fourth full-length for the label; uncanny rhythms and floating ambience create a movie for your mind.

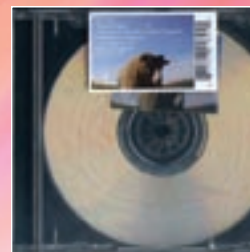
SKAM



THE WORLD ON HIGHER DOWNS
LAND PATTERNS CD

Wisconsin's **The World On Higher Downs** draw on influences ranging from **Slowdive**, **Labradford** and **Wolfgang Voigt's Gas**, using simple rock instrumentation augmented with vibraphone, horns and electronics to create songs with both analog warmth and digital cool, equal parts autumn and spring.

1.1.1



THE TUSS
RUSHUP EDGE CD/3LP

Rushup Edge is the debut album from the latest signing to Rephlex, the UK duo **The Tuss**. With a sound influenced by classic techno, gabba, ambient and classical, this unique blend of head music and mental beats might best be classified as braindance.



Words Stacey Dugan
Photo May Truong

BONJAY

CANADIAN PARTY ROCKERS
BIRTH A SOUNDSYSTEM
THAT'S EQUAL PARTS BABY
CHAM AND BABYSHAMBLES.

Alana Stuart's parents immigrated to Canada as part of the country's Caribbean influx of the 1970s. When Stuart was a toddler, her Grenadian mother and Jamaican father threw parties that swelled to the early morning with plenty of music, food, liquor, and language from the many isles of the West Indies. "I actually have a picture of me in just a diaper and you can see people's legs hanging off the couch, a bottle of brandy, and my mom serving breakfast," Stuart recalls. "It was a time when all the islands mixed. It was this cool, warm vibe where partying was about getting together, meeting different people, and a sense of community."

Despite her roots, Stuart started off making "bubblegum R&B." "I started writing really shitty songs about boyfriends who were calling other girls on the cell phones I got them," she admits. "By age 17 or 18 I hooked up with some producers and got some songs on the urban station in Toronto. But it was really clean, sweet pop, and I just got sick of it."

Around that time she happened upon one of Ian Swain's Disorganized parties—an "open concept" affair (Swain's words) in a modest space above an Italian restaurant in Ottawa's Chinatown. "Ian played Bugz in the Attic's remix of 'Hold It Down,' and I was like, 'Oh my God! What is this music?' I had never heard anything that was in that vein. I told him that I had to work with him."

"Ian came up with the idea of us doing a live soundsystem but I never ever thought I would really do it," continues Stuart, who started off singing patois reinterpretations of indie rock hits (Yeah Yeah Yeahs' "Maps," TV on the Radio's "Staring at the Sun") at the club. "I had never spoken patois growing up, much less sang it, but [Ian] really pushed hard for it and had this vision."

"At soundclashes, they'll do patois versions of Michael Jackson songs because it's a big crowd-pleaser," explains Swain, a.k.a. DJ Pho. "If people hear something that they recognize, but it's flipped differently, then that's always gonna make them go crazy. And we go in this weird direction that's sort of dancehall-meets-soul-vocals-meets-this London-y kind of sound."

That mongrel ethos shines through on Bonjay's first release, the mixtape *Bangarang Business*. Intended to recreate the feel of a live Bonjay/Disorganized gig, it features covers and original Bonjay material spliced with hip-hop, R&B, and reggae hits, and breakbeat instrumentals. Swain samples underground jams by Madlib and Seiji on the tape, but the inclusion of Jill Scott's "Be Happy" and TLC's "Creep" are clearly Stuart's influence.

"We had an idea of what we felt represented us," says Stuart. "I grew up singing gospel music but lived in a middle-class white suburb in Ottawa, so all the dances I had in my basement were to Aerosmith and Ace of Base."

"You love Ace of Base," interrupts Swain, laughing hard. "I've never seen someone love Ace of Base that much."

Bonjay's *Bangarang Business* mixtape is out now. www.myspace.com/woyoyoy

What we got

J DILLA - RUFF DRAFT CD, LP & Cassette
 JAYLIB - CHAMPION SOUND 2/CD deluxe edition
 BUMPS ... breaks, raw, drums by Bitney, Herndon & McEntire of Tortoise
 YESTERDAYS NEW QUINTET - YESTERDAYS UNIVERSE JULY
 OH NO - DR NO'S OXPERIMENT JULY
 PERCEE P - PERSEVERANCE AUG
 MADLIB - BEAT KONDUCTA IN INDIA AUG
 STONES THROW PODCAST ... free & bangin' at www.stonesthrow.com





Inside Empire Roller Skating Center, from Christopher Franko's photo series of New York's last indoor skating rink

END OF AN EMPIRE

Roller disco style is on the brink of extinction in Brooklyn.

In April, the death knell sounded for Brooklyn's 66-year-old Empire Roller Skating Center—with its sale, New York City lost its last indoor roller rink, and a monument to style, finesse, and high-speed fancy footwork played out on 150 feet of maple-wood flooring.

Photographer Christopher Franko, 40, shot the final few months of rocking, skating, rolling, and bouncing with his collection of toy and vintage cameras. "At Empire, skating took on a whole new meaning," writes Franko via email. "It was the self-proclaimed 'Home of Roller Disco' and the skaters were amazing. Many of them had been skate doubles in music videos and movies like *Roll Bounce*. There were all kinds of people: gay, straight, black, white, whatever... Empire was like a big playroom and lots of skaters had [a] kind of free-spirited freakiness to them. But there was one dude in particular [who was] a total enigma. He always skated alone, always laughing to himself. He came dressed each week in '90s hip-hop drag—like if the RZA had a little brother—only he'd accessorize his look with glo-sticks and goggles. I always wondered what his story was."

Musically, Empire was caught between the old and the new, playing a particularly NYC-style mix of R&B and soul classics along with dancehall hits and house jams. "Tracks that will always make me think of Empire [are] 'Boogie 2nite' by Tweet, 'Never Stop' by Brand New Heavies, 'Where I Wanna Be' by Shade Sheist, Kurupt, Nate Dogg & Snoop, and 'Goin' to See My Baby' by Fatback Band," recalls Franko, who, like so many patrons, will now have to drive to Staten Island to practice his crazy legs. *Dusty Saguaro*
www.frankophonetic.net





TOO COLD

Icepick surveys the freak folk of Reykjavik's street art scene.

In *Icepick* (Ginkgo Press; hardcover, \$29.95), Icelandic graphic designer Thordis Claessen surveys her homeland's vibrant street art and finds it invigorating and inspiring. Covering a wide range of themes and subject matters—from Icelandic icons to shagging sheep, from Sigur Rós' stencilism to trumpet-playing tortoises, from blunt demands for world peace to wishes for a dramatic death (rather than a slow, painful one from tuberculosis)—*Icepick* is at its most powerful and compelling when transcending graffiti's overt New York influence and finding currency in a particularly Scandinavian brand of freakish folk art. (Check Surkula's simulta-

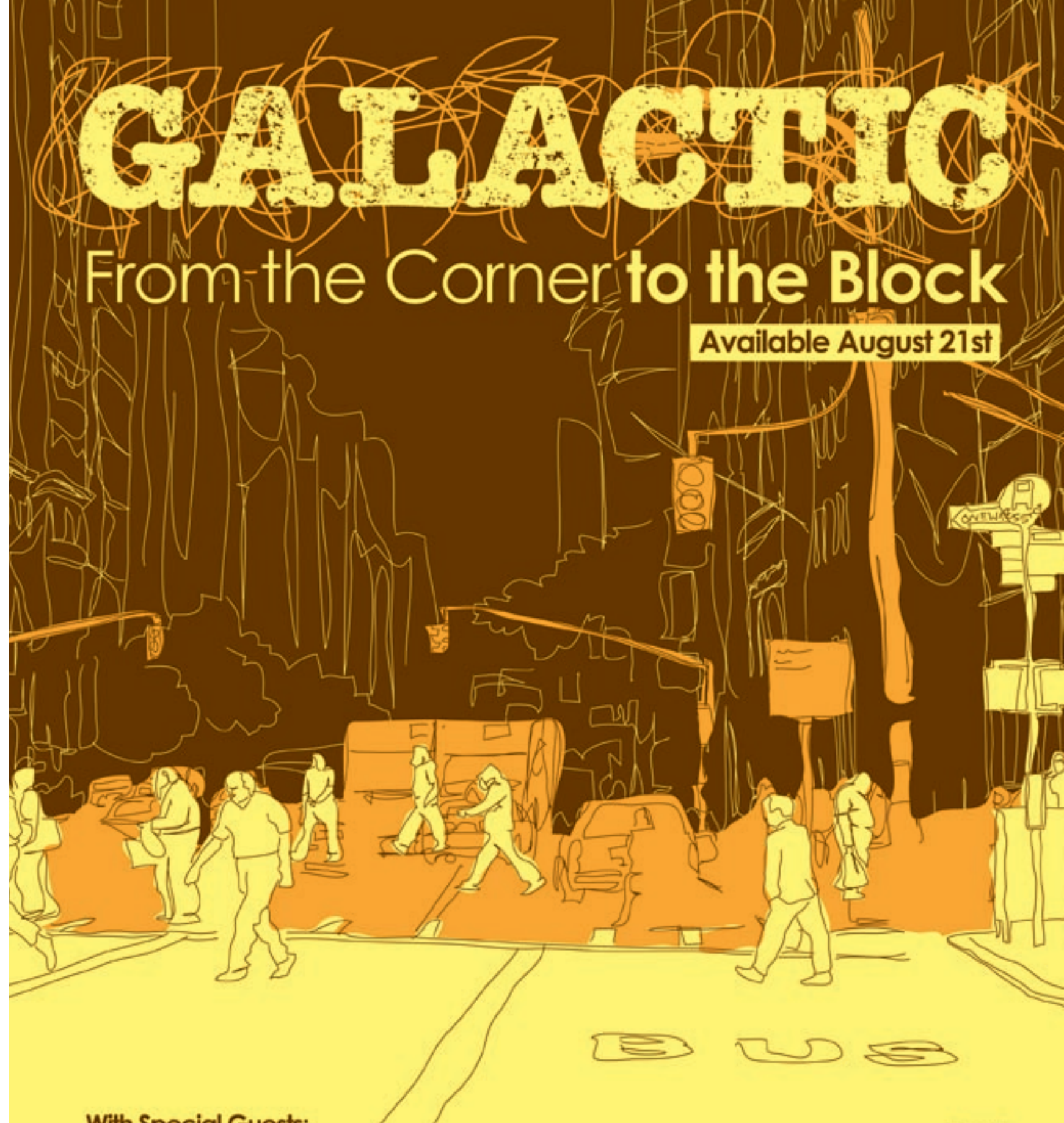
neously ugly/beautiful swan-armed goblins and skeletal dark-eyed women with fish bones in their bellies for starters.) But for Claessen, a well-placed sticker or a simple chalk-drawn slogan (such as "It's cold and hard to live in the Icelandic nature alone") is equally worthy of documenting as a painstakingly rendered piece. Look at the streets in a different way, urges the designer. "Graffiti and street art is an uncensored art form that hits you on the street corner and generally has a short lifespan," says Claessen. "Sometimes it really speaks to us. Sometimes it even gives us a great laugh." *David Hemingway*
www.icepickbook.com

A page from *Icepick* that includes work by Icelandic graffiti artist Surkula

GALACTIC

From the Corner to the Block

Available August 21st



With Special Guests:
 Lyrics Born / Mr. Lif / Chali 2na / Gift of Gab
 Boots Riley / Juvenile / Z-Trip and more...



www.galacticfunk.com
www.myspace.com/galactic

MUSIQUE CONCRETE

XLR8R checks out Montreal's sonic urban landscape. Text and Photos by Ken Taylor



Revelers at Piknic Electronik



The Spaceape

PIKNIC ÉLECTRONIK

The Piknic epitomizes the laid-back vibe of Montreal, especially on MUTEK weekend when techno and house's heaviest hitters bring their stuff to Île Ste-Hélène's Parc Jean-Drapeau, where they drop bass under a sun-drenched Alexander Calder stabile. Fortunately for Montrealers, it happens nearly every weekend in the summer. For our visit, Sutekh and Wighnomy Brothers rocked the place like no other. www.pikniclectronik.com



Ambivalent and Pheek

ATSA/FRAG

Montreal is huge into self-guided audio tours, and they're practically all government sponsored to some degree. Action Terroriste Socialement Acceptable, the artist group known as ATSA, creates urban interventions—via podcasts and signs posted at sites—that examine the ways in which neighborhoods' landscapes change over the years. Their latest FRAG (for "cultural fragment") runs through "The Main" along St-Laurent Blvd between Mont-Royal and Sherbrooke Streets. www.atsa.qc.ca



A FRAG near the SAT

FESTIVALS

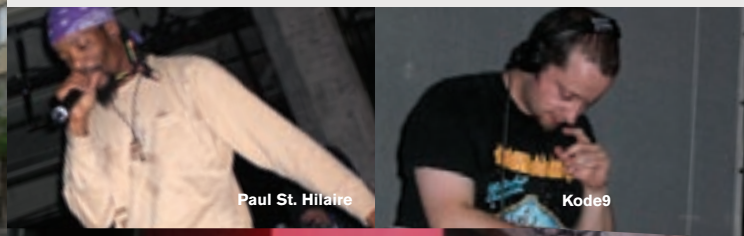
MUTEK, Elektra, Jazz Fest, Pop Montreal... You'd be hard pressed to find a weekend in Montreal without something big going on. In its eighth consecutive year, MUTEK has become the crème de la crème of electronic arts festivals in North America, and over the course of five days in May/June proved itself again with stellar performances from the likes of Kalabrese, Bubbyfish, Gui Boratto, Pantha Du Prince, and tons of other experimenters from all manner of styles. www.mutek.ca



A Murmure Ear

SAT AND SAT [GALERIE]

Not only the venue for some of MUTEK's hottest events, including this year's dub throwdown with Kode9, The Spaceape, Shackleton, Rhythm & Sound, and Paul St. Hilaire, The Society for Arts and Technology's new space also houses a gallery, where multimedia artists host their works. This September, check out curator tobias c. van Veen's collection of audio works from the Upgrade International network featuring hellolithisalex, Alexis O'Hara, onetooofreefor, and more. www.sat.qc.ca, www.upgrademtl.org



Paul St. Hilaire

Kode9



Biosphère



Poutine: a Montreal classic

MURMURE

If you see these giant green ears around town, call the phone number on the sign and catch weird tales and encounters from the sites' past inhabitants, neighbors, and visitors. This one, at St-Laurent Blvd. and Ste-Catherine St., tells the story of life on one of the city's most interesting intersections. Other spots include the SAT and Hotel Godin, and all the stories (along with a site map) are archived on the web. www.murmure.ca

SILOPHONE

The "sonic inhabitation" of Silo No. 5 (an abandoned grain silo in an Old Montreal industrial park), the Silophone was created by multimedia artists [The User] in 1999 as a way of transforming the landmark by combining sound, architecture, and communication technology—and picking up one magnificently long echo tail. Today, anyone can send and reverberate messages through the Silophone via telephone, internet, or a mic-and-speaker-based concrete structure on the waterfront. www.silophone.net



SAT: Society for Arts and Technology



Silo No. 5

The Silophone



SPIN CYCLE

News and gossip from the music world.

We don't know what she's been spending her money on, but at a show at Brooklyn's Studio B back in May **Lady Sovereign** told the crowd she was broke and hardly able to pay rent. Taking the stage at 3:30 a.m. (reportedly due to a bus breakdown), Sov played two songs, sputtered on about how "America fucks you up," and then split, only to apologize a few days later, publicly announcing: "I know how stupid I must have looked on Friday... I was tired and not in the mood, having a bad day. But that's no excuse for letting fans down." • At least Baltimore's **Dan Deacon** stays true to his word. For his recent U.S. tour he invited fans to email him for a chance to perform in his "co-ed choir" and sing the song "Wham City" in their respective cities. Each member wore a special robe designed by Deacon's friend Stefani Levin. For Dan Deacon videos, and even more craziness from Baltimore, check out director **Jimmy Joe Roche**'s website at www.jimmyjoeroche.com. • On the topic of the Charm City, August 4th and 5th will see the debut of **Virgin Festival by Virgin Mobile** at the Pimlico Race Course. Sound corporate enough? Amongst performances by Smashing Pumpkins and Ben Harper, you can also catch sets from **Booka Shade**, **LCD Soundsystem**, and **M.I.A.** Head to www.virginfestival.com. • Back in March, Diplo put a new Dizzee Rascal

track, "Pussyhole," up on his Mad Decent blog. Rumor has it that Dizzee was pissed about it and punched Diplo out when he saw him in London. • Following **Xiu Xiu**'s recent summer tour, bassist **Devin Hoff** (Nels Cline, Good for Cows, Carla Bozulich) officially joined the band. Devin has played on Xiu Xiu records in the past and will tour with the band beginning in 2008. Xiu Xiu's second album with **Larsen**, as **XXL**, was recently released on Important Records. • As of press time, Simon "Captain Strobe" Taylor from **Klaxons** and Luisa "Lovefoxxx" Matsushita, lead singer of **CSS**, are still a couple. • On May 27, a slew of performers, including multimedia artists **Mike Relm** and **Pamela Z**, played a concert at Tipitina's Uptown to benefit New Orleans' still-troubling housing shortage. • **Murs** is taking his Paid Dues Festival on the road this summer (through August) after a successful one-off in Southern California. Confirmed acts include **Felt** with **Slug & Ant** (of **Atmosphere**), **Living Legends**, **Sage Francis**, **Brother Ali**, **Cage**, **Mr. Lif**, **Grouch & Eligh**, and **Lucky.I.A.m**. More special guests to be announced at www.paidduesfestival.com. Also, expect a new full-length from the man in charge this fall. • Reported in Spin Cycle earlier this year, **The Coup**'s **Boots Riley** was scheduled to speak at Berkeley's Black Students



Graduation. He recently pulled out of the engagement in support of the UC Custodian Union's right to "end poverty wages," according to a statement from Epitaph Records. • Atlanta rapper **Pastor Troy** bowed to pressure from retailers to change the name of his new album, originally titled *Saddam Hussein*, to *Tool Muziq* for the official release. "The *Saddam* title was just a metaphor for how I was comin' back for my shit, hostile takeover-style," said Troy. • **Interpol** drummer **Sam Fogarino** and **Swervedriver/Toshack Highway** frontman **Adam Franklin** have joined forces as Setting Suns. Check out their debut, *Bolts of Melody*, now. • Viddy well, my droogies. Check out the new **Roky Erickson** (of **13th Floor Elevators** fame) doc, *You're Gonna Miss Me* (Palm Pictures), and *Her Noise*, a film about the female-performed and curated sound-art

exhibit of the same name, made by *The Wire* editor Anne Hilde Neset. The latter is an amazing glimpse into the artistic psyches of **Diamanda Galas**, **Kim Gordon**, **Kaffe Mathews**, and more. Watch it for free at www.ubu.com/film/her_noise.html. • More for the grrrlz: If you haven't read *How Sassy Changed My Life* (Faber and Faber), a recent tome about the impact of the groundbreaking young-lady-hipster-empowerment mag, you should. For info on contributors, readings, and where to buy, visit www.howsassychangedmylife.com. Sassy!

1. Booka Shade
2. Dan Deacon (by Stefani Levin)
3. Mike Relm
4. Diamanda Galas
5. *How Sassy Changed My Life*
6. Adam Franklin

"KILL YOURSELF ON THE DANCEFLOOR" MIXTAPE

BY BRYAN BLACK OF INDUSTRIAL TECHNO DONS MOTOR

- 1. THE TUSS "DEATH FUCK"**
The new Aphex Twin project is amazing. Hardcore and soft at the same time.
- 2. HOMOTRONIC "U LOOK LIKE A GAY"**
Is it Tiga? Or a NIN/Marilyn Manson collaboration? A hilarious slap in the face to DJ culture.
- 3. MOTOR "SIKK"**
Every time we play this, the audience just collapses. It just destroys everything in sight.
- 4. RENEGADE SOUNDWAVE "COCAINE SEX"**
Not just a great title.
- 5. THEO PARRISH "FALLING UP (CARL CRAIG REMIX)"**
Carl Craig is the remix master. He turns everything into an epic monster.
- 6. THE KNIFE "LIKE A PEN (STEPHAN BODZIN REMIX)"**
Haunting.
- 7. T. RAUMSCHMIERE VS. MOTOR "KRANK IM HIRN"**
Insane in the membrane. Insane in the brain. A Cypress Hill-approved dancefloor killer.
- 8. LINDSTRØM "LET'S PRACTICE (12" VERSION)"**
An obvious tip of the hat to Giorgio Moroder. Eleven minutes of dripping electro-disco.
- 9. DRUGBEAT "KILL YOURSELF ON THE DANCEFLOOR TONIGHT"**
XLOVER and Crossover join forces. "Let's get sushi and not pay."
- 10. LIAISONS DANGEREUSES "LOS NIÑOS DEL PARQUE"**
An underground French act from the '80s. Spastic. Timeless.

Motor's *Unhuman* (Mute) is out now. www.mute.com



Motor

Labels We Love

XLR8R'S 6TH ANNUAL GUIDE TO THE BEST INDEPENDENT LABELS.

WORDS VIVIAN HOST & KEN TAYLOR
ILLUSTRATIONS DELICIOUS DESIGN LEAGUE

We call this feature Labels We Love but we might as well call it Labors of Love, since that's really what this is about: mavericks ignoring prevailing record-industry "wisdom," flipping the bird at common sense—and sometimes common decency—in the name of supporting music that needs to be heard. Every year we hear that the indie label is going to die, often from the owners themselves; despite this threat, our favorite imprints just seem to be getting stronger and more important than ever (especially in the face of the practically useless mergers... We mean, majors). So until blogs, MP3 sites, podcasting, straight-to-brain downloads, and rocket-fueled jetpacks replace the humble record label altogether, we'll be doing this feature. And rest assured that label owners will continue to remain as charming, cantankerous, funny, fed-up, freaked-out, and fantastically individual as ever.



1. ANTI-/EPITAPH

A punk powerhouse branches into the outer realms of indie and hip-hop.

Location: Los Angeles, CA

Artists: Tom Waits, Sage Francis, Busdriver

Funny story: Just prior to Tom Waits' interview on the *Daily Show* with Jon Stewart, he made a trip to the men's room where the ceiling tiles actually collapsed on his head. Jon Stewart said, "It was like an earthquake hit the bathroom. Thank God for us. Thank God for America, that night Tom Waits was wearing his Kevlar hat."

Favorite other label: Hellcat Records

Favorite lunch spot: Okay, it's not lunch, but our most favorite spot to eat at is Pinkberry. Green tea yogurt with blackberries, strawberries, and mochi... *mmm*. We're completely addicted.

Office mascot: Any one of the five dogs we have in the office on a daily basis.

Funniest label disaster: The day an entire wall of our office caved in from a mudslide.

Upcoming releases: Galactic *From the Corner to the Block* featuring Boots Riley, Lyrics Born, Chali 2na, Mr. Lif, and Juvenile; The Weakerthans *Reunion Tour*; Lyrics Born and Cadence Weapon albums.

www.anti.com, www.epitaph.com



2. ASTRALWERKS

Former big beat slingers hit the comeback trail in 2007.

Location: SoHo, Manhattan, NY

Artists: Tracey Thorn, The Chemical Brothers, Air

Funny story: Everything we can think of is too embarrassing and our artists will kill us.

Favorite other label: Sub Pop

Favorite lunch spot: Bazzininuts, a typical NYC gourmet deli and general store. Great, fresh food and it's always cool when you can eat lunch and spot Robert DeNiro.

Office mascot: The fat kid from the cover of the UK album cover for FatBoy Slim's *You've Come a Long Way Baby*.

Funniest label disaster: Making 100,000 copies of the *Six Feet Under* soundtrack and then realizing that the wrong audio master was used. We had to destroy them all. Not funny at the time but seeing we had so much success with the record we can now look back and laugh.

Upcoming releases: New albums from VHS or Beta, Prinzhorn Dance School, Small Sins

www.astralwerks.com

From left: Anti- publicity director Hilary Villa, Astralwerks label manager Glenn Mendlinger

3. BUZZIN' FLY

Ben Watt's London house imprint (and its Strange Feeling sublabel) bangs with the best of them.

Location: Camden, London

Artists: Ben Watt, Justin Martin, Rodamaal/Darkmountaingroup

Funny story: Ben Watt was drinking at the bar with EBTG partner Tracey Thorn before DJing one night. When he finally took to the decks, someone came up and said, "You better play something good. Everything But the Girl are here."

Favorite other label: Ever Records

Favorite lunch spot: Hawley Arms, Camden. An old man's boozier that has inexplicably become Camden's latest hotspot. Mussels, chips, and beer, and Kate Moss in the corner.

Office mascot: Nothing is belittled or infantilized. We are all serious deep electronic house and techno grown-ups.

Upcoming releases: Debut album from Paris' Mlle. Caro and Franck Garcia; new mix album from Justin Martin; *Buzzin' Fly Vol. 4 Remixes*

www.buzzinfly.com

4. CADENZA

Luciano builds a cozy home for the year's most vibrant house and techno singles.

Location: Berlin, Germany (formerly in Zurich, Switzerland)

Artists: Luciano, Ricardo Villalobos, Thomas Melchior

Favorite other label: Perlon

Favorite lunch spot: Pan Aroma, a small and nice restaurant offering an exquisite mix of European and Asian food. Gregor, the owner, also runs Club der Visionäre, our favorite after-work spot, where our artists frequently play.

Office mascot: Orchids—as you can see on our artwork.

Upcoming releases: New singles from Alejandro Vivanco, Digitaline & Luciano, and Petre Inspirescu.

www.cadenzarecords.com

5. COMPOST BLACK

A Munich heavyweight's little sister makes most interesting dancefloor bits.

Location: Munich, Germany

Artists: Move D, Patrick Pulsinger, Zwicker, Lopazz

Funny story: Patrick Pulsinger is heavy into tuned cars and spends most of his time lying under cars, repairing and pimping them. When he came to the office to play us his new 12-inch, he came with one of his rare, pimped-out BMWs. Everybody in the office wanted to drive the car instead of checking his new tracks. Finally, the whole office had listened to the tunes while driving the car.

Favorite other label: Mojuba, Esel Rec, Dial, and Liebe Detail

Favorite lunch spot: Goldstaebchen (which means "goldsticks"). It's a party service with Thai food and sandwiches. We always feel ill from that food, but we still order from there every day. Maybe we are masochistic.

Office mascot: The pimpin' pope in his yellow Cadillac. It's a huge oil painting hanging in the office.

Funniest label disaster: The sales.

Upcoming releases: 12-inches from Manuel Tur & Dplay, TJ Kong featuring Robert Owens, Houseworks (which is Muallem teamed with Fauna Flash's Christian Prommer), and Wagon Cookin', plus Compost Black label nights in North America this winter.

www.compost-records.com

6. DIRTYBIRD

It's *La Cage aux Folles* for Claude VonStroke's Californian dancefloor pranksters.

Location: Haight Street, San Francisco, CA

Artists: Justin Martin, Claude VonStroke, Worthy, Christian Martin

Funny story: We once booked Justin Martin a gig in Miami that ended up being at a tiny gelato shop with no DJ equipment. The best part is that the promoter acted like he was giving Justin a shot at the big time on the phone.

Favorite other label: Impossible question

Favorite lunch spot: All You Knead on Haight Street: burgers or omelettes. It's not even very good but they have nice round booths that fit the four of us perfectly. We always meet there to make all of our big decisions.

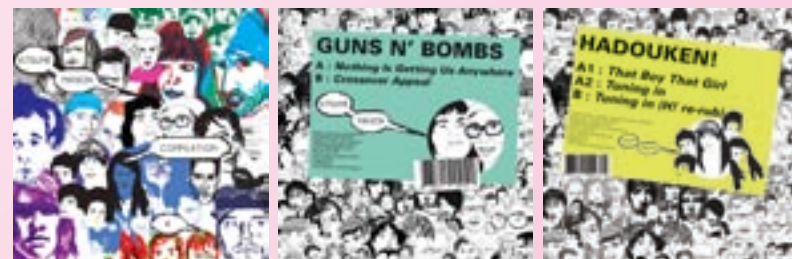
Office mascot: Umm... the bird.

Funniest label disaster: Constant spelling mistakes. Also, I get drunk sometimes and say I'm signing a track and then I have to tell the artist later on that it's not good enough. Terrible.

Upcoming releases: Channels Presents *Catz n Dogz—The Chicken Affair* EP; Riva Starr's "Bubble" with Claude VonStroke and Tanner Ross remixes; Claude VonStroke & Christian Martin's *Groundhog Day*; The Martin Brothers' *EP #2*

www.dirtybirdrecords.com

From left: Buzzin' Fly founder Ben Watt, Compost Black owner Michael Reinboth, Cadenza founder An Reich, dirtybird owner Claude VonStroke, dirtybird label manaer Bryan Waddington, Kitsuné co-founders Gildas Loaëc and Masaya Kuroki



SLY FOXES

KITSUNÉ'S CHAOTIC, COOL-KID RECORD SLEEVES REFLECT THE PERSONALITY-FILLED ELECTRO-ROCK WITHIN.

WORDS ANDREW PARKS

Starting in the summer of 2001, London's elusive Åbåke collective (Patrick Lacey, Benjamin Reichen, Kajsa Stahl, Maki Suzuki) began drawing the faces of "friends, family, musicians, manufacturers, superheroes, etc." on Kitsuné's record sleeves. Six years later, nearly 500 scribbled and scrawled cool-kid portraits—from a before-the-hype Bloc Party to about-to-break acts like Boyz Noize, Punks Jump Up, and Hadouken!—adorn the covers of the fashion-forward label's 12"s and best-selling *Kitsuné Maison* compilations.

This "Where's Waldo?" of the electro-house/dance-rock/filtered Daft Punk disco world not only makes the releases jump off the shelf—it's also a sly reminder of just how instrumental the Parisian label has been in breaking indie-dance crossover artists in the '00s.

"For the sleeves, we get the music and send back the story we'd like to tell as text before any visuals," say Åbåke, via a winding and sometimes bewildering collective email. "For [Kitsuné's first compilation, the 2002 release] Love, we proposed that all the records would [offer] the promise of a romantic evening package. In addition to the music, which supposedly evoked love, we [provided] food recipes. The conversation and the flirtatious attitude we did not provide."

Next, Åbåke took food porn to a literal level, photographing mushrooms, berries, peppers, and pears in not-so-subtle sexual positions. (Shakedown's "Lovegames" single uses various fruits and vegetables to evoke a well-groomed vagina, for instance.)

It's hard to tell whether Kitsuné co-founders Gildas Loaëc and Masaya Kuroki got where the art direction was going at first. "Gildas said several times that our way of working and its formal aspects were not so much his taste, but he'd try to eat it and start liking it," explains Åbåke.

Loaëc's patience and trust in Åbåke's vision paid off, solidifying a partnership that's lasted for more than five years. And not just on the surface either—Loaëc and Kuroki each have a "26% share" of Kitsuné, with Åbåke's four members splitting the label's remaining 48% stake. Given that they're responsible for nearly half of Kitsuné's operations, we asked Åbåke what they plan on doing as more and more DJs toss their 12-inches away in favor of ultra-slim hard drives.

"We appreciate the object but we have little interest in nostalgia," they say, rather matter-of-factly. "Our parents are amazed that we produce vinyl. We do think of JPEGs on iPods as a rather poor relay for the visual story of a musician, but this is in itself a phenomenon which we can make work from."

www.kitsune.fr

A TANGLED WEB

DECODING THE WILD (AND WILDLY VARIED) WORLD OF MP3-ONLY LABELS.

WORDS DEREK GREY

The internet is the best alternative that up-and-coming music curators have got at their disposal. Just as blogs have moved in on 'zines' territory, digital labels have been popping up left and right, and with little-to-no overhead their catalogs have the potential to be endless extensions of the Long Tail theory.

With releases going back as far as 1998, Montreal's **No Type** (www.notype.com) was an early adopter of the MP3 format; despite putting out some albums on CD and vinyl, their site still offers plenty of free and purchasable downloads from experimental computer-pop artists like Darck, The Twombly Spiders, Napalm Jazz, and others. The site's interface is super-pedestrian, but think of it as No Type passing the savings on to you.

Also from that neck of the woods, **Epsilonlab** (www.epsilonlab.com), a label founded by Pheek, Mateo Murphy, and friends, shares its bounty of minimal techno and house for paid download—definitely worth a look around for lovers of the Montreal sound. For more abstract techno and other glitchy beats, trainspotters can also check out **Thinner** (www.thinner.cc), a net-based label that's host to nearly 100 releases. More into dark, deep techno? Visit **Norbu Music** at www.norbumusic.com.

Upitup (www.upitup.com) might just be the place to turn you onto new hybrids of the exotica sound via Vernon LeNoir: Toytronica from Jacques + Pierlo or choppy IDM from Eustachian, perhaps? It's a mixed bag worth trawling your cursor through. Those fiending for more crazy sounds of the breakcore and ragga variety should log onto **Chase Records** (www.chaserecords.free.fr), or, for Books-style pastiche, listen in at **Rodoid.org**.

If drone/ambient is your thing, we recommend **mimi** (www.clubotaku.org/mimi/) for tons of free, unheard sounds from Mosaïque, Necrostilet, and other moon-gazing groups.

The jumpier 8-bit sound explodes on so many different sites, but our favorites are undoubtedly **8 Bit Peoples** (www.8bitpeoples.com) and, for Nintendo dub, **Jahtari** (www.jahtari.org), particularly for their net-only 7-inches and EPs.

The lost sounds of pre-millennium rock and funk you never heard the first time around are abundant at **Anthology** (www.anthologyrecordings.com). Find unearthed gems from Oneness of Juju alongside Kraut-rockers Dom and Jersey proto-metalheads Sainte Anthony's Fyre. Classic!

Perhaps one of the most interesting developments in digital labels, though, is the story of **Kitty-Yo** (www.kitty-yo.com); the one-time hard-copy label based in Berlin recently downsized itself to a net-only label. Still, it hasn't shaken their resolve; in fact, it's only revitalized it with a slew of new cheaper-to-produce releases from The Tape & RQM, Christian Meyer, and Rhythm King and Her Friends. The times they are a-changin', and maybe for the better.



7. DOMINO

Ten years strong, and still one of the most surprising indies around.

Location: HQ in Wandsworth, London, UK with offices in Brooklyn, Berlin, and Singapore

Artists: Franz Ferdinand, Arctic Monkeys, Animal Collective

Funny story: Benjy Ferree was inspired by Drag City/Domino recording artist Will Oldham at an early age—but to act, not to play music. Ferree had just seen Oldham's performance as a teenage preacher in the movie *Matewan*, a dramatic movie about the struggles of coal miners in Appalachia based on true events that involved some of Ferree's antecedents. Twenty years later, with Ferree migrating his focus from acting to music, he and Oldham are now labelmates.

Favorite other label: Kompakt. The Gui Boratto album, *Chromophobia*, is an office favorite right now and The Field's "A Paw In The Face" could be played on repeat for hours.

Office mascot: There is the mounted head of some sort of jungle cat on the wall as you enter the office in London. (Before anyone gets too upset, it's fake.) In the U.S. office during the month of March, the unofficial mascot is the jayhawk.

Funniest label disaster: We got the name of an Arctic Monkeys b-side wrong on the back sleeve of their U.S. debut single. Instead of "Chun Li's Flying Bird Kick," it was "Chun Li's Spinning Bird Kick." (Sorry, I never played *Street Fighter II*. I was of the *Missile Command* generation.) When the song got nominated for the "Best Rock Instrumental" for the Grammys, we tried to right the wrong, but were instructed that they were going to have to stick to the title as originally released. Sorry, fellas.

Upcoming releases: Animal Collective's *Strawberry Jam*, a new Notwist album in 2008, Max Tundra, and the solo debut from Dev of Test Icicles under the moniker Lightspeed Champion.

www.dominorecordco.us

8. FABRIC

The cut of their cloth? Curating the world's finest club mixes.

Location: Farringdon, London, England.

Artists: Hundreds.

Funny story: J Majik was stopped at U.S. customs with his DJ box. When asked what music he played he replied "drum & bass," to which he was asked, "Well sir, where then is your drum and your bass?"

Favorite other label: Every other label we have licensed tracks from in equal measure. Nice try, *XLR8R!*

Favorite lunch spot: Eat. 10 yards from office. Chicken pot pie—legendary. Hope and Anchor. 30 yards from office. Bacardi Breezer-Gooseberry.

Office mascot: Shealan, our New Media guy.

Upcoming releases: Mix CDs from Ewan Pearson, Marcus Intalex, Ricardo Villalobos, James Murphy & Pat Mahoney, Steve Bug, and Justice.

www.fabriclondon.com

9. HYDRA HEAD

Isis frontman Aaron Turner unearths the bands making metal interesting again.

Location: Los Angeles, CA. The Rampart district, to be exact.

Artists: Cave In, Pelican, Botch. (Isis gets an honorary mention, since most folks think they are on Hydra Head.)

Funny story: At SXSW this year, Oxbow had their set shut down when Eugene wouldn't put his pants back on. A clash between Eugene and the four bouncers subsided just prior to it popping off... That is, until Trevor from Pelican thought it wise to spit on one of the bouncers. Then it fully popped off. Thanks, Trevor.

Funniest label disaster: The new Pelican disc was delayed from May to June after the delivery truck carrying the CD stock rear-ended a shitbox car directly in front of our office, setting the shitbox and, eventually, the truck in flames. We pulled a portion of the stock from the truck before the firemen threatened to have us arrested.

Upcoming releases: New stuff from The Austerity Program, Xasthur, Pet Genius (ex-Cave In), Jesu, Pelican, and Kayo Dot, as well as deluxe reissues of classic Botch and Coalesce records.

www.hydrahead.com

10. INSTITUBES

Squelchy, in-your-face electro-house with two million tons of personality.

Founders: Tacteel, Teki Latex, Jean-René Etienne, and Emile Shahidi.

Location: Paris, in the Triangle of Death: Gare du Nord—République—Stalingrad.

Artists: Para One, Tacteel, Surkin.

Funny story: Surkin has already been on the cover of *XLR8R*. Check out issue #103: He's one of the kids surrounding Xavier and Gaspard from Justice. But which one? The first *XLR8R* reader to give us the answer at can_you_spot_surkin@institubes.com wins an autographed t-shirt from Surkin. Seriously!

Favorite other label: Roulé (Emile); Factory (Jean-René)

Favorite lunch spot: Café Pierre, Place de la République. It's a regular Parisian bistro with some ill-advised effort on the decor. The food isn't great, but it's quite central and easy for everyone, so it's become our second office.

Office mascot: Bobmo.

Funniest label disaster: Laptop crashes during live sets. But we have spares now. Spare artists too.

Upcoming releases: New singles from Surkin, Bobmo, Midnight Juggernauts, Curses!, Das Glow, High Powered Boys, a movie soundtrack and a live album by Para One, and Cuiziniér's new street album.

www.institubes.com

11. KING STREET SOUNDS

Proudly maintaining the legacy of deep and soulful New York house music.

Founder: Hisa Ishioka

Location: Midtown Manhattan. The "Fashion" (read: "Pimp") District, where you'll find powder-blue track suits made of pure mink for sale.

Artists: Louie Vega, Dennis Ferrer, Ananda Project

Favorite other label: A toss up between West End, Sleeping Bag, and Metal Blade
Favorite lunch spot: Cavallo's Pizzeria on 7th Ave. and 28th St. Arguably the best vodka penne for, like, \$6, and they give you Semolina bread to mop up the creamy vodka sauce. We think there's crack in that there sauce!

Office mascot: Our beautiful office kitty, Pocahontas. She's been coughing up her meals lately, leaving little "gifts" for us on our desks and chairs, so we've been calling her Puke-ahontas (not to her face, of course).

Funniest label disaster: The worst return from winter break ever—we came back to find all our newly refurbished CD cabinets were not installed properly and had come crashing down on top of our desks, crushing computers and anything in their way.

Upcoming releases: Ananda Project's *Five Flower* album and the Tiger Stripes Safari record.

www.kingstreetsounds.com

From left: Domino owner and founder Laurence Bell; Fabric promotions chief Steve Blonde and owner Keith Reilly; Hydra Head founder Aaron Turner (left) and label manager Mark Thompson; Institubes co-founders Emile Shahidi and Jean-René Etienne; King Street founder Hisa Ishioka

WOW AND AGAIN

APOCALYPSE WOW COLUMNIST ROY DANK PICKS HIS FAVORITE DISCO AND LEFTFIELD DANCE IMPRINTS.

1. BEAR ENTERTAINMENT/ BEAR FUNK GOLD/BIG BEAR

Stevie Kotey's family of labels has been quietly putting out disco gold over the past several years. While Kotey's own productions are nothing to scoff at—his recent outing with legend Chaz Jankel is worth noting—his labels' collective output has boasted everyone from New Yorkers Nick Chacona and Brennan Green to Japan's Oorutaichi and Altz to Europe's Lexx and Zwicker.

www.bearentertainment.info

2. DFA

What can possibly be said about this impossibly cool label that hasn't already been said? Oh right, please finish *The Loving Hand* album, Mr. Goldsworthy! Keep your ears perked for forthcoming goodies from Hercules and Love Affair (boasting vox from Antony of Antony & The Johnsons) and Still Going's ecstatic Balearic house.

www.dfarecords.com

3. EDITS LABELS

Gotta give it up for those labels triumphantly flying the versions flag: Mindless Boogie, Editions Disco, Soft Rocks, and D-I-R-T-Y Edits are all bringing the re-edit heat, for real.

4. ESKIMO

These Belgian cats have been making a serious dent in my wallet over the past year. 2007's already witnessed the awesomeness of Pete Herbert's projects *Reverso 68* (with Phil Mison) and *LSB* (with Baby G), plus Lindström and Prins Thomas yet again deliver the goods, and Justus Kohncke unveils his new alias *Division by Zero*. And just wait 'til you hear *Aeroplane's* mesmerizing debut.

www.eskimorecordings.com

5. FULL PUPP

Prins Thomas touts Norwegian disko with his consistently awesome label. Norwegian techno hero Mental Overdrive recently joined the clan, releasing "Spooks" to much acclaim, while both Todd Terje's massive "Eurodans" and Thomas' own "Fehrara" are still doin' damage.

www.myspace.com/fullpupp

6. MULE MUSIQ

Hard to believe this Tokyo-based label is just two years old, considering their catalog is already a staggering 17 releases deep. Sly Mongoose's brand of live disco is all that and then some, while fellow countrymen Force of Nature's offerings here are arguably their best work to date. And don't forget stellar remix turns from the likes of Padded Cell, Rub-N-Tug, and Henrik Schwarz, to name but a few of the non-Nipponese they've reeled in.

www.mulemusiq.com

7. OBJEKTIVITY

Dennis Ferrer's seemingly unstoppable imprint comes off more techno than its house origins may suggest. It's "culturally" house, much like Dixon's and Âme's *Innervisions*, although *Loco Dice's* remix of Ferrer's classic "Son of Raw" only continues to fuel the techno fire.

www.objektivty.com

8. PERMANENT VACATION

From the reissue of Antena's *Camino Del Sol* album and the steady stream of killer remixes it spawned, to Kathy Diamond's gut-wrenching full-length, this relatively new Munich-based imprint has made quite a profound early impression. Recent singles from the Canary Islands' Ilya Santana and Toronto's Steve Yanko have only furthered P.V.'s plans for world domination.

www.permanent-vacation-records.com

9. THISISNOTANEXIT

Simon A. Carr's label has only just sprung from the womb, but it's already managed to put out Optimo's mindblowing mix of out-there indie rockers *They Came From the Stars*, *I Saw Them*. Easily one of the best fusions of dance and indie music there ever was. Ever.

www.thisisnotanexit.net

10. VERSATILE

The name says it all. Parisian Gilb'R kickstarted the label way back in 1995, and he's still pushing the envelope with essential numbers from label stalwarts I:Cube, Joakim, and Chateau Flight (itself a collaboration between Gilb'R and I:Cube). Latest signing *Zombie* furthers the legacy.

www.versatilerecords.com

12. KOMPAKT

2007 is another pivotal year for the kings of German techno.

Location: Köln, Germany

Artists: Gui Boratto, The Field, Supermayer

Funny story: One of our artists is a professional drinker. He's actually testing liquor for the government. Cool, huh?

Favorite other label: Esel

Favorite lunch spot: Kompakt Kitchen: daily fresh-made organic, vegetarian, non-smoker food.

Office mascot: The old crest of the city of Köln, a two-headed eagle.

Upcoming releases: *TOTAL8* compilation, *Supermayer Save the World*

www.kompakt-net.de, www.kompakt-mp3.net

13. LIGHT IN THE ATTIC

Miners of old-soul, funk, and reggae gold, with a dash of modernity thrown in for good measure.

Location: Seattle, WA

Artists: Karen Dalton, The Black Angels, Betty Davis.

Favorite other label: Factory, Elektra/Reprise/Warner in the late '60s/early '70s

Favorite lunch spot: A little shack called Paseo in Fremont (Seattle), two blocks from our office.

Delicious, flavorful jerk chicken Caribbean sandwiches, but go for the Mediterranean bowl and grab lots of napkins... It's messy!

Office mascot: The Wheedle—a furry, much-beloved, much-hated bear who was the mascot for the Seattle Supersonics in the 1970s/'80s and the inspiration for our compilation *Wheedle's Groove: Seattle's Finest in Funk & Soul 1965-75*.

Funniest label disaster: Our previous office was located in a dingy basement of an old house—kinda reminiscent of that creepy scene in *Silence of the Lambs* ("put the lotion in the basket"). After two years we had to move, as the basement kept leaking and stinking while our 90-year-old landlord denied it all.

Upcoming releases: *Summer Records Anthology 1974-88* and full-lengths from *The Saturday Knights* and *The Blakes*.

www.lightintheattic.net

14. PAPER BAG

Canada's newest outpost for the best in indie dance and electronic rock.

Location: Toronto, ON

Artists: Tokyo Police Club, You Say Party! We Say Die!, Uncut

Funny story: Following Controller.Controller to a show in Chicago and watching their van spontaneously catch on fire. As they pulled over and threw the back doors open, seeing flames come out was scary (yet funny once the initial shock wore off). Some band merch was sacrificed but all the amps and guitars were saved.

Favorite other label: Sub Pop

Favorite lunch spot: Jumbo Empanadas.

Homestyle Chilean food. They are the best lunch patio in Kensington Market, where you can find a competing Chilean empanada shop (El Gordo) directly across the street.

Office mascot: Our old intern Wes. He's now in Vancouver and we miss him; his sense of style was unparalleled.

Upcoming releases: New records from Holy Fuck and Laura Barrett.

www.paperbagrecords.com

15. PLANET-MU

μ -ziq builds a home for darkside glitch, dubstep, and breakcore with a devil-may-care attitude.

Location: Hackney, London, UK

Artists: Venetian Snares, Vex'd, μ -Ziq

Funny story: It made us laugh when the owner of a Dutch hotel asked us to pay for the damage that Venetian Snares and his drunken cohorts allegedly did by urinating on beds. It was, in fact, the support act who pissed himself in his sleep. Um.

Favorite other label: Rephlex

Office mascot: Wankface, the melted Fisher-Price phone.

Upcoming releases: Luke Vibert's *Chicago, Detroit, Redruth*; μ -Ziq's *Duntisbourne Abbots Soulmate Devastation Technique*, *Shitmat's Beastiality*, plus new albums from *The Gasman* and *Venetian Snares*

www.planet-mu.com

16. ROOM 40

Head Down Under for experimental ambient's latest sonic uprising.

Location: The sunny climes of Brisbane, Australia. Bring your sunscreen!

Artists: Tujiko Noriko, Text Of Light, Keith Fullerton Whitman

Funny story: One of our artists has written a yet-to-be-produced horror film; another worked in a turtle restaurant, both for the stories (lyrical inspiration) and the free turtle food stuffs.

Favorite other label: I have a good deal of respect for Kranky, 12K & L~NE, Touch, 23Five & Helen Scarsdale Agency and, of course, Someone Good.

Favorite lunch spot: It used to be a wonderful Mexican spot called El Torito. The designers Rinzen and I lunched there every Friday for a year... good times and full bellies.

Office mascot: Schnapps the schnauzer is our official mascot. He's a top-notch little fellow.

He tends to his very own MySpace page: www.myspace.com/schnappstone.

Funniest label disaster: For a sampler we did last year I personally packed 7000 CDs in a day and a half. I was doing it in my sleep for weeks after. I've still got RSI!

Upcoming releases: Albums from *Tenniscoats*, *Steinbruchel*, *Chris Abrahams & Mike Cooper*, *Tim Hecker*, and the *Airport Symphony* edition.

www.room40.org

From left: Kompakt owner Wolfgang Voigt; Light In the Attic co-owners Matt Sullivan (left) and Josh Wright; ROOM 40 owner Lawrence English



17. SMC RECORDINGS

Mac Dre's stable holds it down for the hyphy movement.

Location: Mission District of San Francisco, with a satellite office in Los Angeles

Artists: Pastor Troy, Mistah F.A.B., Capone of CNN

Funny story: Our new record deal with Pastor Troy came about after he saw a DVD about Bay Area legend Mac Dre. He was trippin' out 'cause of how Dre was and couldn't believe it. So we bought him a copy of *Treal TV 1* and compiled our personal Best of Mac Dre and sent it down to him. After he got it, he called back and we started talking about a deal.

Favorite other label: Ice Cube's Lynch Mob records. We just love how proud they are to be indie. Their "Damn, it feels good to be independent" campaign is something we wish we came up with.

Favorite lunch spot: La Taza Cafe. It's across the street and is pretty much a coffee shop/deli, but they have a bunch of random meals. We hit it up at least once a day.

Office mascot: Captain McJarbon. He's a handicapped dude that's been around the neighborhood forever, on some Forrest Gump shit. He has no idea the stories he's sitting on.

Funniest label disaster: We had a problem with stores running out of product on a certain release. Instead of calling and screaming at everyone we drew a very humorous stick-figure diagram titled "Panic! At the Distro" that made its way into our wonderful distributor's company meeting. It definitely got their attention, though they didn't find it as funny as we did.

Upcoming releases: Capone of CNN and Green City, a group Scarface discovered and is executive-producing.

www.smcrecordings.com

18. THE SOCIAL REGISTRY

Shard-sharp indie rock and electro-punk experiments by way of Brooklyn.

Location: Greenpoint, Brooklyn, NY

Artists: Gang Gang Dance, Blood on the Wall, Psychic Ills

Funny story: When Gang Gang Dance and Blood Lines played at Chop Suey in Seattle they nearly caused a riot. The venue tried to kick Blood Lines out of the club and GGD refused to continue playing, started chanting "Fuck Chop Suey," and caused 14 cop cars to show up.

Favorite other label: Table of the Elements, Kompakt, Silt Breeze

Favorite lunch spot: Pies and Thighs. It's a barbecue place in Greenpoint. Awesome Southern side-of-the-road-style food served outside by Joe Denardo from Growing (if you're lucky).

Office mascot: Laurence Lazarou

Funniest label disaster: Because Blood on the Wall's initial foray into Canada was marked by their booker not lining up their work permits, they have been dogged every time they play there. The last time we received a hushed phone call from Courtney Shanks informing us that that they were being escorted out of the country after their 24-hour stay by men with sub-machine guns.

Upcoming releases: Gang Gang Dance's *RAWWAR* EP; Christy & Emily's *Guen's Head*; Samara Lubelski's *Parallel Suns*, Blood on the Wall's *Lifers*; and the continuation of our monthly 7-inch series, *The Social Club*, with releases by IUD, Growing, and many others.

www.thesocialregistry.com

19. SOLID GROOVE

Switch and friends bring cheeky rhythms and in-your-face bass back to house.

Location: London, England

Artists: Switch, Jesse Rose, Speaker Junk

Favorite other label: Counterfeet

Office mascot: Sinden

Funniest label disaster: We were unloading some stock at a friend's house and some local scallywags must have nicked a couple of boxes out of the van. When we went back later, the whole street was covered with smashed-up vinyl. Cheeky buggers had a proper game of Frisbee with 100 Dubsided promos.

Upcoming releases: A Jesse Rose album, a Dubsided comp mixed by Speaker Junk, and new Solid Groove, Switch, and DJ Fame tracks.

www.myspace.com/dubsided

20. STAUBGOLD

Post-post-rock and seductive experimentalism from bands whose names you can't spell.

Location: Berlin, Germany

Artists: To Rococo Rot, Faust, Ekkehard Ehlers

Funny story: When *Wire* magazine visited Faust for a cover story in their home in the South of Germany, Faust's Zappi Diermaier served so much vodka with orange juice on the first night that all band members suffered from a serious hangover and refused to answer any questions for almost two days.

Favorite other label: Lovely Records

Funniest label disaster: The first two releases were both vinyl in special handmade sleeves. After we had already bought all the materials, we found out that it took me about 10 minutes to finish one sleeve. Both releases were rather successful, so we spent nights and nights and nights gluing paper and photos on cardboard.

Upcoming releases: Albums from Alejandro Franov, Sun, and Klangwart.

www.staubgold.com

21. STONES THROW

Peanut Butter Wolf's classy imprint remains the most reliable name in indie hip-hop.

Location: Lost Gates, California (a.k.a. The Highland Park neighborhood of East Los Angeles)

Artists: Madlib, J Dilla, Peanut Butter Wolf

Funny story: A movie production took over our office warehouse last week to shoot a scene where Ice Cube runs out with a stolen TV. Upstairs we had Arabian Prince, one of the other founding members of N.W.A., who we're doing an album with this year. At the end of the day we found out Arabian Prince had the nicer car of the two.

Favorite other label: Ghostly International (Egon); SST; Slash, Frontier (Jeff)

Favorite lunch spot: El Atacor #11, Taco Spot, and Via Mar are all competing in-office for best tacos in East L.A. Egon likes Nicole's Gourmet Imports in South Pasadena, 'cause it's inexpensive, super-fresh, and healthy.

Office mascot: The grey-jacketed Doom toy that we did with Kid Robot or Quasimoto's brick. It's just a red brick, but someone recently offered us \$30 for it.

Funniest label disaster: Trying to create warehouse space in our turn-of-the-century building's first floor. Our warehouse currently looks like something out of *Silence of the Lambs*—only one intrepid employee will venture down there unarmed.

Upcoming releases: New records from Percee P and Madlib this month, followed by Guilty Simpson, James Pants, Heliocentrics, and Supreme Team (Madlib & Karriem Riggins) this fall.

www.stonesthrow.com

From left: SMC VP of Marketing George Robertson and Accounting Director Maureen Akika, Social Registry co-owners Rich Zerbo, Jim Colvill, and Joe Gaer; Solid Groove owner Dave Taylor (a.k.a. Switch); Staubgold founder Markus Detmer; Stones Throw founder Peanut Butter Wolf

BROWN SOUND

GILLES PETERSON'S NEW BROWNSWOOD LABEL BUBBLES WITH ALL THINGS JAZZ-FILLED AND SOULFUL.

WORDS JOSHUA P. FERGUSON

BC Radio One disc jockey, international DJ, and world-renowned tastemaker Gilles Peterson has set up a new label dedicated, like the man himself, to carrying the torch for soulful music, regardless of style or tempo. Here's an overview of some of the imprint's finest talents.

www.brownswoodrecordings.com

BEN WESTBEECH

Armed with a brown blazer and a popped collar, plus twinkling piano riffs and a classically trained background, drum & bass head-turned-soul crooner Ben Westbeech's debut album, *These Are the Best Years of Your Life*, plays like a musical mission statement for all Brownswood has in store. Produced by Westbeech and Full Cycle buddies DJ Die & Clipz, it departs from D&B's heritage into downbeat jazz, broken-beat soul, and pop-riddled goodness, while Westbeech's honey-sweet vocals sing of a carefree life, starkly defying that stereotypical Great British gloom.

THE HERITAGE ORCHESTRA

Imagine a film soundtrack, sweeping in its grandiosity, accompanying scenes of soaring over mountains and oceans into a cloud-filled stratosphere; an epic filled with dozens of strings, layers of thunderous drums, the wailing calls of a brass section, and vocals that exude the vibe of a smoke-filled jazz club—this is the sound of The Heritage Orchestra. At their mightiest, they comprise upwards of 60 people in full orchestral bloom, performing songs that embrace the intensity of the classical form while pushing the boundaries of jazz, broken beat, and downtempo.

ELAN MEHLER

While riffing away on a piano composition in the lobby of a swank Swiss hotel, Elan Mehler was approached by Mr. Peterson. A conversation later, Mehler found himself with a record deal. Recorded live with his quartet, Mehler's tracks are underpinned with free-flowing intimacy and an edgy sophistication. Evoking classic Bill Evans, piano and guitar mingle until the sax man steps in flirtatiously, getting so close one can even hear the click of the sax's keys.

MIDDLEWOOD SESSIONS

Gilles staked his career on championing all things jazz in Britain, so it's no surprise to find these up-and-coming players on his label. Taking cues from modern jazz stalwarts like Sleepwalker, Cinematic Orchestra, and Jazzanova, Middlewood Sessions are lush and spiritual, deep, and wonderfully contemporary.

JOSE JAMES

Though Jose James is influenced by early-'90s conscious hip-hop, it's Billie Holiday and John Coltrane who have really shaped this American singer-songwriter's sound. With a floating swing, James writes and sings in the style of jazz past, breathing renewed life into the genre.

22. TRU THOUGHTS

British purveyors of future jazz, broken breaks, and new soul from old souls.

Location: Brighton, England, in a weirdly green building

Artists: Quantic, Alice Russell, Nostalgia 77

Funny story: Quantic, TM Juke, and founder Robert Luis were in New York last year. We were offered some space cakes which were cooked for the Wu-Tang's GZA for his gig that night. They were so strong we did not sleep and laughed nonstop 'til the next day (for about 12 hours).

Favorite other label: Ninja Tune. They always release music they like, and it's always independent.

Favorite lunch spot: Pause. It's a café run by an Asian family. They do traditional British dishes like jacket potatoes and sandwiches but also amazing curries.

Office mascot: We did have a Wall of Mirth.

Hardly a mascot, but somewhere we used to put the things that made us laugh—country & western drum & bass artists asking to sign to us, middle-class English kids dressed up as 50 Cent (seriously), weird emails we get through the website, and any threats we happen to get! **Funniest label disaster:** Quantic was in U.S. and ended up DJing at a Beyoncé photo shoot and having his picture taken with her. Paul Jonas was excited and sent the picture to a few magazines thinking he could make Quantic the male equivalent of Paris Hilton (but with talent). Quantic was not happy about this and gave Paul a rollocking!

Upcoming releases: The new Quantic Soul Orchestra album, and TM Juke has been hard at work producing and co-writing with Alice Russell for her album's fall release.

www.tru-thoughts.co.uk

23. VP RECORDS

From Jamaica to Jamaica, strictly the best dancehall stormers and reggae jams.

Location: Jamaica (Queens), NY

Artists: Sean Paul, Elephant Man, Beres Hammond

Funny story: After bribing Elephant Man with a bottle of Hennessy so he would come to the office in Jamaica, we followed him to a show from Kingston to Trelawney. His driver told us it was a 20-minute ride. It took four hours of driving in a van with no brakes, arriving at 2 a.m. and returning to Kingston at 6 a.m. He performed for 17 minutes...

Favorite lunch spot: Nelly's Café on Jamaica Ave. Two roast chicken legs and two thighs with white rice and veggies for \$4. We are on a budget around here.

Upcoming releases: New albums from Assassin, Elephant Man, Shaggy, I-Wayne, and Morgan Heritage.

www.vprecords.com

24. VICE

A shock 'zine curates hit makers from all around the world.

Location: Toxic Williamsburg, NY

Artists: Bloc Party, The Streets, Charlotte Gainsbourg

Funny story: At one show, someone came up behind Jared from The Black Lips and stuffed a bottle rocket in his pants. It went off like three inches behind his nutsack and burned off all the hair.

Favorite other label: Hydra Head

Favorite lunch spot: Kasia's is a Polish diner on Bedford Avenue whose phone number is listed on our staff contact list. The delivery guy comes on a hot pink bike and teaches us Polish phrases and gives us our hangover cures.

Upcoming releases: Black Lips' new LP this fall.

www.vicerecords.com

25. XL RECORDINGS

An eclectic stable of big personalities, and their even bigger hits.

Location: Notting Hill, London and Tribeca, New York

Artists: Prodigy, The White Stripes, Thom Yorke, Dizzee Rascal

Funny story: During an internal set-up meeting last year with Peaches, she announced to the entire label staff that she was going to call her third album *Fatherfucker 2*.

Favorite other label: Tie between Rough Trade, Domino, Wichita, and 4AD

Favorite lunch spot: In NYC, the Halal cart on Hudson and Vandam. In London, it's Books for Cooks on Blenheim Crescent.

Office mascot: Jack the white-tailed deer. He's just a head, really, mounted on a lovely wooden plaque.

Funniest label disaster: When Ratatat played at the Guggenheim last year, Mike Stroud and Jacob, the keyboard player, snuck out to the loading dock to have a swig of Jack Daniels and a smoke before they were due to perform. A security guard caught them and tried to escort them from the premises. Everyone inside was frantically searching for the missing band members while Mike was nearly in tears trying to convince the guard that he was actually supposed to be there, and that 1500 people were waiting for him to take the stage. After the show, the inside of the Guggenheim was so trashed by the Ratatat fans that they got banned from ever performing there again.

Upcoming releases: Devendra Banhart's new album, plus the debut from Jack Penate.

www.xlrecordings.com

From left: Tru Thoughts label boss Robert Luis; VP label manager Chris Chin and his father, founder Vincent Chin; XL Recordings owner Richard Russell

WATCH OUT NOW

TEN RECORD LABELS TO PEEP IN THE MONTHS AHEAD.

1. ALPHA PUP

Daddy Kev's L.A.-based label has crafted a super team of hip avant-gardists from the Left Coast, including out-there rappers Busdriver and Subtitle and interstellar travelers Daedelus and EdIT.

www.alphapuprecords.com

2. DIAL RECORDS

From Lawrence's heart-rending tech to Efdemin's lovely, layered quilts of sound, Germany's premier source for minimal house and emotive ambient pushes the boundaries of bliss while making us consider applying the term "intelligent" to dance music once again.

www.dial-rec.de

3. HIERO IMPERIUM

Bay Area MC legends Hieroglyphics sound better than ever, putting the party rocking on hyper-speed with back-to-back solo knockers from some of the liveliest hip-hop personalities around (Tajai, Opio, and A-Plus, to name a few).

www.hieroglyphics.com

4. MAD DECENT

Only a few releases deep, Diplo's label proves equally adept at unearthing great underground sounds from around the globe (Bonde Do Role, Baltimore club dude Blaqstarr) and marketing (a shirt with Mishka, and his excellent podcast). Can't wait to hear what's next.

www.maddecent.com

5. MOBILEE

Berlin minimal's next generation—Sebo K, Pan-Pot, Exercise One, and guests like Magda and the band Mia—click 'n' grind on Anja Schneider's and Ralf Kollman's two-year-old imprint, which boasts compellingly subtle grooves and high-quality mastering.

www.mobilee-records.de

6. OM HIP-HOP

We've been feeling a little "eh" on the OM label's house releases, but their hip-hop stable shows big promise with conscious, jazzy boom-bap from Zion I, Strange Fruit Project, and Zeph & Azeem.

www.omhiphop.com

7. MASSIVE B

Bobby Konders' American dancehall outpost, active since the mid-'90s, has been demanding our attention again since last year, with the release of Collie Buddz's massive "Come Around," plus hot riddims Jah Love and Tony Matterhorn's '90s-dance-influenced March Out.

www.massiveb.com

8. REKIDS

This label provides hypnotic, loopy, and sometimes haunted house and techno that proves depth and the dancefloor aren't mutually exclusive. Plus, label owner Matt "Radio Slave" Edwards culls some great remixes from the likes of Claude VonStroke, Jesse Rose, and his own alter ego Quiet Village.

www.rekids.com

9. STILL MUSIC

Jerome Derradji's smooth house and jazzy broken beat label puts Chicago on the map again, while re-rubs from dons Jazzanova and Phil Asher up the good-vibes quotient.

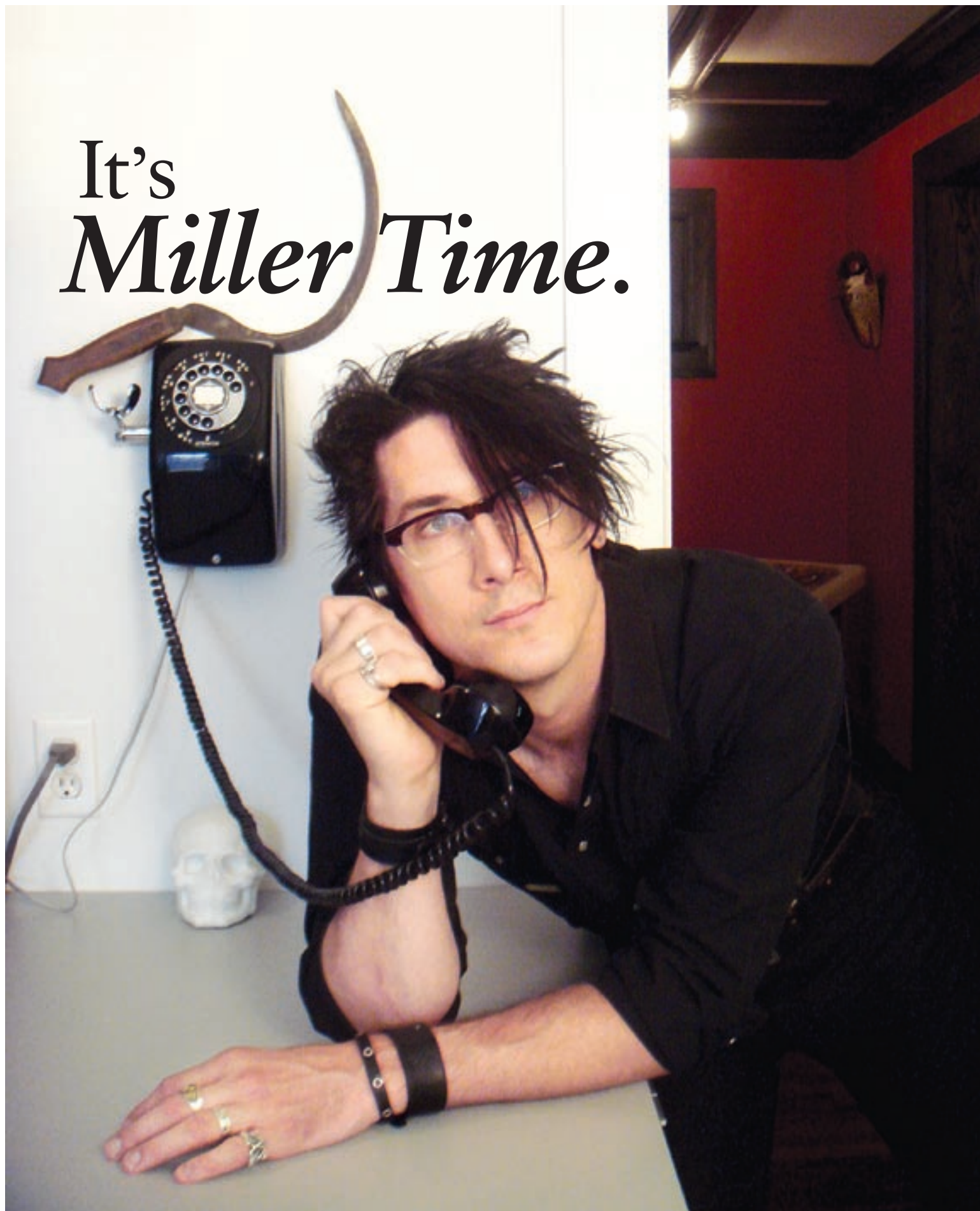
www.itstillmusic.com

10. TROUBLE & BASS

Drop the Lime's crew of Brooklyn-based bass heads (of which XLR8R editor Vivian Host—alias Star Eyes—is a part) scissors up dubstep, electro-house, pop, 4x4 garage, and B-more club to create new-sounding dancefloor bangers, with forthcoming releases from Acid Jacks, Boy 8-Bit, and Passions vs. Curses.

www.troubleandbass.com

It's *Miller Time.*



MUTE FOUNDER DANIEL MILLER AND
ADULT'S ADAM LEE MILLER DISCUSS
WHAT'S BREWING IN THE WORLD OF
INDEPENDENT LABELS.

WORDS KEN TAYLOR
PHOTOS NICOLA KUPERUS (ADAM)
AND PAUL O'VALLE (DANIEL)





“I thought, ‘Fucking hell. People think I’m a real record label.’”

Since the late '70s, London's Mute Records has been a bastion of independent music and culture. The label, an early home to industrial/new wave torchbearers like Fad Gadget and Depeche Mode, remains a guiding light, challenging the ethos and aesthetic of the major labels, despite its purchase by EMI. Recently, we linked up Mute founder Daniel Miller with Adult's Adam Lee Miller, proprietor of Detroit's Ersatz Audio imprint (once home to Mute-inspired acts like Magas and Tamion 12-inch), for a cross-continental chat about labels then and now, and how to keep the indie dream alive.

Adam Lee Miller: The first thing that I'm interested in talking about is the fact that you had no master plan with starting Mute.

Daniel Miller: I just wanted to put out a single ["T.V.O.D." b/w "Warm Leatherette" by Miller's band, The Normal]. And I didn't think anybody would like it. I thought I would just go back to doing something else. But the record was very well received, which was shocking to me... I put my address on the record's sleeve for whatever reason—I suppose I hoped to get fan mail or whatever—but what I got were demo tapes, which shocked me. I thought, "Fucking hell. People think I'm a real record label." It suddenly dawned on me that there was a possibility that I could become a record label... Then I met Frank [Tovey a.k.a. Fad Gadget] and heard his demos and we got on really well... So I guess that was the point at which I said, "I'm gonna do it. I'm gonna take the plunge." My definition of starting a label is putting someone else's record out, really, and having responsibility for someone else's career.

XLR8R: Adam, did you feel that responsibility to other artists on Ersatz Audio?

ALM: I did, but I had quite a few problems where I felt like a lot of people weren't putting the same

amount of work back into what I was doing, and that wasn't a good thing mentally. DM: That's a very frustrating experience. I've had that as well, at times, and at that point you think that maybe it's time to part company.

XLR8R: Do artists feel there's more of an onus to promote themselves now than back then?

DM: In those days, the opportunities to do promotion were much more limited than they are now. In the UK, there were four weekly music papers—*Sounds*, *Melody Maker*, *NME*, and *Record Mirror*... Definitely artists understand that if you make a commitment to their careers, and they want success, they're gonna have to do some promotion. There's so much noise out there, that if you're gonna poke your head above, you've gotta do more than just put out a great record.

ALM: I'm curious, coming from the way I've done things in the past, I never really talked to bands about the importance of touring—I just sort of assumed they knew it...

DM: Well, we sign two types of artists in that sense: One, we sign bands who already are a band, and they go out and play; and we sign those who aren't a band. Goldfrapp, for instance, wasn't a band. When we started working with them, they'd never done a gig. They weren't a live band, so we had to construct that and nobody really knew if it was gonna work or not. We don't put in our contract [that] you have to play live, but what's really important to me when I sign an artist is that the expectations are shared. Like, we don't sign a band who do pure noise and want to be on [BBC] Radio One. Like Liars, for instance. I'm not saying they make pure noise—they put out great records—[but] I don't expect them to phone me up and say, "How come we're not on the A-list of Radio One?" We all understand where we're going with this.



“We’re gonna say “Fuck you” to the majors or even infiltrate [the mainstream]’... I think that’s what Mute did.”

“People immediately start blaming—or are afraid of—the MP3, and I don’t think that’s the problem.”



ALM: How important is it to have a good PR team? Because sometimes I think it really just comes down to hype or a hit, especially with MySpace now. When [Mute band] Depeche Mode played the Rose Bowl [in 1988], was that just building on a momentum or was there a big PR team in place as well?

DM: “PR team” is a bit of an over-glorious word... We had a press person doing press, but we didn’t say, “In six months’ time we want to be playing the Rose Bowl.” It was quite a big risk to do that, but one that was doable and worth taking. But I think it was just the explosion of the band in California, really. People were shocked that an electronic band that hardly anybody had heard of, really, would play to 70,000 people.

XLR8R: Still, does it come down to hype? And can you control that?

DM: There’s a band we tried to sign recently. There was a flurry of interest in October, and we were making really good progress with them doing the deal. Then they put a seven-inch out, which got picked up by Radio One, got played on one show, and the deal went out of control. We gave it up because it went way beyond where we thought it should be. Believe me, the thing I hate most is the deal process—with the early signings on Mute, we had no contracts. [In this instance], the deal process took longer than the hype.

ALM: I think a lot of people immediately start blaming—or are afraid of—the MP3, and I don’t think that’s the problem... It’s the speed of everything.

DM: You have a band that’s done some good demos in their home studio, and before you know it, they’re being offered half a million pounds. If they’re not a good band, then take the money I say [laughs]. But if they’re good and they’re serious about having a career and wanting to develop artistically, it can be disastrous! Pressures to deliver certain things really early on are totally counterintuitive to doing the right thing for artistic development and natural growth.

XLR8R: How has Mute maintained such a good track record for developing artists’ careers?

DM: I think it’s just giving people time. Not unlimited time [laughs], but there’s a natural instinct [for us] to want to push to the envelope, to experiment as much as possible, and to encourage

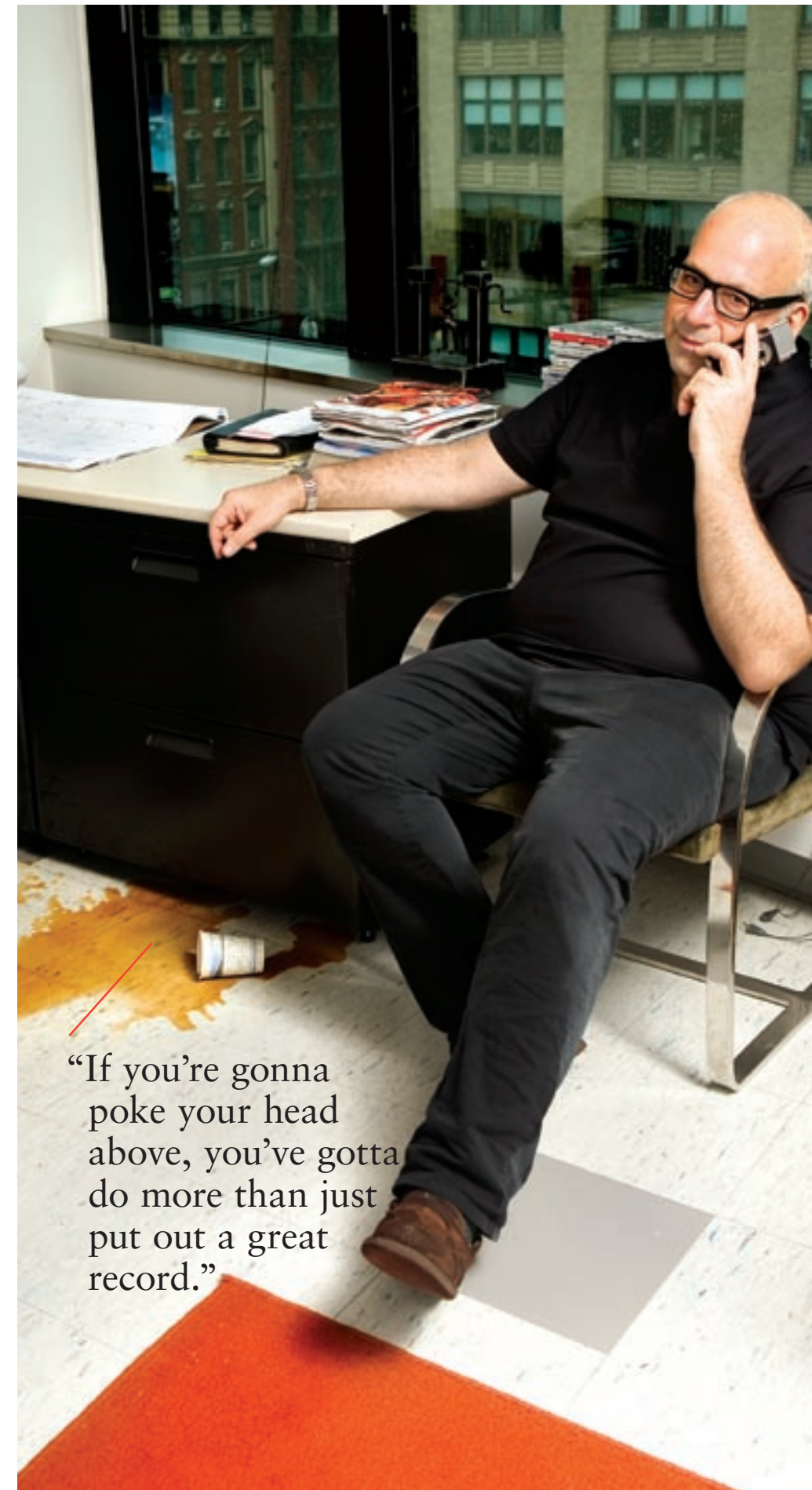
people to be original and not be tempted to follow any fashion or trend—and just working with the right artists who can actually do that.

XLR8R: What do you think is the key to maintaining an independent spirit with regards to owning and operating a label?

DM: Well, I sold Mute to EMI about five years ago but I think that the spirit of Mute hasn’t changed. The way we operate obviously changes because the marketing changes, but in the sense that we think and act independently—I think it’s a state of mind that you have to preserve above anything else. And the deal that I did with EMI was designed to preserve that state of mind as much as any deal can. It’s hard to define what that is really. There are no two independent labels that are the same, or that have the same ethos or aesthetic, and that’s what’s great about it. All major labels have basically the same ethos, aesthetic, and goals. I think it’s all about the people who run it, doing what they want to do within the constraints of the market in general.

ALM: I think there are two different independent mindsets. One is sort of the shy kid in the back of the class that just doesn’t want anyone to bother him, and wants to be left alone to do his weird drawings, and doesn’t want anything to do with the world. And that’s partly why Ersatz Audio was not a big label... I can’t sit there and do the bookkeeping and the things that didn’t work for me. Over the years things got more complicated and, being an artist as well, those things started affecting my clarity of vision. That’s why we went with Thrill Jockey [who currently handles Adult.], because they had very much the same sort of [outlook]. It’s like in this book *This Band Could Be Your Life*, it talks about how Black Flag wanted to create a tour route that was parallel to the mainstream tour circuit but didn’t interfere with it, and that’s sort of my independent spirit. Then the other independent spirit is “We’re gonna have hits, and we’re gonna say ‘Fuck you’ to the majors or even infiltrate [the mainstream] and put our ideas in it—and we’re gonna change culture in a bigger way.” I think both parts are important. And I think that’s what Mute did—me being 15 in Indianapolis, hearing Depeche Mode on the radio, and going, “What is *this*!?”

Adult’s Why Bother? is out now on Thrill Jockey. www.adulthood.com
Mute’s latest releases include *Maps We Can Create* and *Motor’s Unhuman*. www.mute.com



“If you’re gonna poke your head above, you’ve gotta do more than just put out a great record.”



The New WORLD MUSIC

TANZANIAN HIP-HOP! SOUTH AFRICAN HOUSE! GUYANESE SOUNDSYSTEMS! DIPLO, MAGA BO, AND OTHER COMPULSIVE TRAVELERS DOCUMENT THE RAWEST UNDERGROUND MUSIC WORLDWIDE.

ILLUSTRATION PAUL DARRAGH

“World music” is a horrible idea. It makes you think of corny CDs with “native” drawings that are sold at the Nature Company; stuff to twirl around to at hippie festivals, songs that aging bearded play at dinner parties to seem well-traveled. The term itself is offensive, creating an artificial distance that places Western music on a pedestal, and music from “the rest of the world” into a bin labeled “exotic” or “outdated” or “unintelligible.”

But there’s a new musical Esperanto emerging, as technology makes it possible for musicians to collaborate across time zones and machines are manipulated to form a lexicon of rhythm and sound that’s at once globally understood *and* individual. Where the difference in structure and sonics between, say, a European orchestra and a “traditional” band from Angola might have once been too wide for the average ear to traverse, modern Angolan electronic music—*kuduro*—has elements in common with punk, deep tribal house, and even Daft Punk.

Musical cross-pollination has been happening as long as people have been moving around the globe. “Orchestra Baobab from Senegal takes its

inspiration from Cuban salsa, and Colombian *champeta* contains elements of Congolese *soukous* and Jamaican *ragga*,” points out musician Maga Bo, who contributes soundsystem photos from all over the world to this piece. Nevertheless, technology is accelerating the rate and depth of this process, making it possible for a California native and a Tanzanian taxi driver to bond over 50 Cent, and a Philly bike messenger to geek out to Brazilian *baile funk*.

Referring to “the new” world music is our joking reference to seeing “world music” differently, but also a way to suggest that we’re listening to and making the music of a “new world,” where borders are routinely crossed and a dancefloor is a dancefloor, no matter where it is. We’d love to bring you a full-on special about Japanese dancehall or Johannesburg *kwaito*, but in the meantime, we asked some of our favorite world travelers for some missives from the field.

Vivian Host



DIPLO'S SET

DIPLO CREATES A WORLDWIDE CREW BY ERASING BOUNDARIES BETWEEN BAILE FUNK AND BALITMORE CLUB, DANCEHALL AND KUDURO.

WORDS MIKE DUNLEAVY

"I was always restless," says 31-year-old Wes Pentz, better known to y'all as Diplo: globetrotting DJ, Mad Decent label owner, and champion of bass music big and small. As a youth, Pentz moved all around the Dirty South—hitting Mississippi, Tennessee, Georgia, and Alabama before landing in Florida, becoming enamored with Miami bass, and learning how to DJ in hotel lounges in Spring Break, USA (a.k.a. Daytona Beach, Florida). He hitchhiked to New Mexico, lived in Japan, and did earthquake-relief volunteer work in India before landing in Philly, where he daylighted as a schoolteacher and moonlighted as half of boundary-pushing hip-hop DJ duo Hollertronix.

Eventually, music got the best of him. He quit the day job to travel to Rio de Janeiro, linking up with *baile* funk's heavy-hitters under the auspices for writing an article for *The Fader*. On the plane ride home, he edited together the tracks he had been given into 2004's renegade mix CD *Favela on Blast*, and its subsequent popularity sealed his fate as one of few tastemakers able to break non-Western music to first-world hipsters.

Pentz's straightforward manner and straight-up hype has earned him some backlash on the blogs, but you can't say he's fallen off. He recently launched Mad Decent, a label championing the likes of Brazilian art-rockers Bonde Do Role and next-gen Baltimore club producer Blaqstarr, with upcoming releases from South Rakkas Crew and a soon-to-be-disclosed African rock band. *Favela on*

Blast, a *Wild Style*-esque video documentary of the same name as his mix CD, will begin touring film festivals in the fall. Pentz is also planning to open a music production outpost in Rio that will support itself by selling tracks made at the school via iTunes, and he recently produced tracks with young, 2Pac-obsessed rappers at a remote aboriginal school in the Australian outback. We caught up with Diplo at home in the Eastern U.S. time zone, and asked him what's going down everywhere.

www.maddecents.com

Was it initially difficult for you to play tracks you've discovered, like *baile funk* stuff, to U.S. audiences?

Naw. There's a whole scene of weird DJs all over the world that are like me. And the taste in music these days is so much more eclectic than it was five years ago. Kids come to parties and they're more intelligent about music. They don't just have MTV or trading with a friend—the internet has created a place where they have more access to things. When we were doing the Hollertronix party, we couldn't play much of anything that wasn't hip-hop—we had to play [Jay-Z's] "Money Ain't a Thing" at peak time. Now every club in New York is playing Baltimore club into The Gossip into Dirty South hip-hop. That wasn't even a concept before.

Things are able to move now, [thanks to] the internet. Nothing's foreign anymore. Reggae artists will sample The Surfaris' "Wipeout" and make a huge hit. Some country dude will have a song with Nelly and it will be played on Top 40 radio!

[As far as DJing different stuff], it's all about context. You just can't go to the club and be like, "Look how crazy I am. I'm going to play the craziest shit." You have to finesse it. With hip-hop we're so lucky—[records come with] the acapella and the instrumental, and nobody really takes advantage of that, besides doing crappy mash-ups. That stuff is a really simple and useful key to edge your way into some different things. A good DJ is one who breaks new music. It's not about making the crowd happy and getting paid to play Avril Lavigne every night.

What music is exciting to you right now?

South Africa's house scene. When I went down there to visit, middle-class black kids were going to techno clubs, and the poor kids all listen to *kwaiito*, which is their form of slowed-down garage music. In Angola, there's the *kuduro* scene, which is really progressive and weird and experimental. They have less than the *favelas* in Brazil and they're making more progressive music. In Angola, the music doesn't really have choruses; they just rap and rap for hours, kind of



like a grime rave [in London]. They'll make songs sampling MSN Messenger sounds because they come on the computer for free. It's not even like, "Let's pick up an old record and sample it" anymore. It's like, "Fuck it! The computer already comes with some shit." And I don't mean sounds that come with Garage Band—just sounds that are on the desktop.

House beats and dance music just hits in Africa—and gets more stuck in the 'hood. It becomes this crazy, sampler-driven kids' music that doesn't really appeal to anybody but me and other people that are music freaks.

I think people have the perception that a lot of people in the ghetto only listen to hip-hop. When in reality you've got stuff like Chicago ghetto house... In the U.S., we've got Baltimore club, Chicago house, the Detroit house and techno scenes, and even the New York house scene... This music always comes from gay black scenes. It comes from these kids doing whatever they want and going against society. Baltimore club is a gay music, at its start. With *baile* funk there's a gay element to it as well; like, they have transvestites that are always their sidekicks. All the music really comes from the fringe element, kind of like a punk thing. It's against society, it's against what you would think is supposed to be "suitable" for the people there.

What's the craziest situation you've put yourself in to get new music?

In Jamaica, you have to travel around to people to get your dubs done or get tracks made, and that's pretty hardcore. The Japanese kids are the craziest. They'll go anywhere. They'll go to a prison and do dubs. They don't have any concept of danger, I guess, and they're such dancehall freaks.

Going to *favelas* is fucked up but I never had a problem. People are just really excited that I'm into their music and want to collaborate with them. Going to some *barrios* in Argentina was really eye-opening, seeing the music that's happening there from the Paraguayan and Bolivian immigrants that live in the shantytowns outside of Buenos Aires. At least in *favelas*, it's always a party, it's colorful, it's exciting, and there's community, but the [shantytowns] in Argentina are really depressing. They're making really cool new-school *cumbia*. *Cumbia* has been around forever and it's really popular in Mexico and Latin America; it's the real ghetto shit with a slow beat—not like reggaeton.

The more I talk about the crazy things I've seen it puts what I do into a weird light—it kind of defeats the point. I mean, guns are everywhere and you see violence routinely, but I try not to talk about that. It makes it seem like I'm doing some *Indiana Jones*-type shit and it's not like that.

BOMBAY THE HARD WAY

Dublab music wrangler Frosty finds the holy grail in an Indian bazaar.

I looked online for a long time trying to find any information on record shopping in India—there was almost nothing. Finally, a Belgian friend of mine told me about this place he'd been turned onto through another friend. It's not the only record store in India, but one of very few. It's in the Null Bazaar (also called Thieves Bazaar, because they say that anything stolen in Bombay ends up there). Getting there was a super-multi-directional expedition—every 10 feet you had to ask for directions.

The guy who owns it is named Haji Ebrahim (shown at left); he's probably about 55. His main business is repairing old-school radios and phonographs, but he's a record freak. I was looking for Bollywood records from 1967 through 1982, everything from rock and psych and jazzy cabaret sounds to disco stuff. When all of these composers got drum machines and synthesizers in the '70s and '80s, instead of replacing all the other sound sources they would use them in addition to full orchestras.

I had a list of records I was looking for—things that in a perfect world I would find. Within 10 minutes, Haji had had my list of 20 records fulfilled and on the counter. He knew everything back-to-back—he could look at an album and tell me I would like song number three on a particular side—and he knew exactly what I was looking for: crazy drum breaks and weird synths.

From what I've gathered, India is not really a collector's culture. It's not like Japan, where you find everything in pristine condition. People really use things—they see music the way it should be, as something to be used and enjoyed. It's much more of a cassette culture now. Every time we would go through the security in the airport, they would be suspicious of our records at first, then they would look at each other and start laughing. They were amazed that we would have records or want them. Frosty See "The Wig Curryer" at www.flickr.com/photos/dublab for more photos, and check dubstreamformulas.blogspot.com for access to Frosty's Bollywood Blast podcast.



BEAT STREET

ADVENTURES IN SOUND FROM A PRODUCER WHO USES THE WORLD AS HIS STUDIO.

WORDS & PHOTOS MAGA BO

I am attracted to autonomous manifestations of individuality, resourcefulness, creativity, and humanity. For over 20 years, I've been traveling in search of rhythm- and bass-heavy sounds that bump out of distorted loud speakers in mini-vans, taxis, buses, shacks, shops, and PA systems on streets around the world. I've found that the most exuberant and interesting music is made by people who are so inspired and intent on sharing their creative vision that impediments encountered in the production

process end up shaping the sound more than the most expensive or advanced plug-in could ever feign to do. In the absence of corporate, government, or record-label funding, this is hardcore DIY by people who have never heard of punk rock or street teams, and whose system of sonic reproduction and distribution is a response to fucked-up economies, police corruption, lack of basic amenities, and the necessity to express oneself and pay the bills at the same time. *Viva a cultura da rua!*

1. In Dakar, Senegal, this guy stood on the corner all day long shouting out prices for the fabric that he was selling—every once in a while rocking some tunes and then shouting over that. This is his full setup.

2. A closer detail of the makeshift street-corner soundsystem in the first photo, composed of a microphone spliced into a portable radio powered by a car battery running two external loudspeakers on a stand.

3. Akhenaton studios in Zanzibar, Tanzania, where I gave some lessons in beat production and recording.

4. Georgetown mobile soundsystem, Guyana. One of the beautiful things about

these soundsystems is that they are totally customizable, and the older and more used they are, the more they reflect their owner's taste.

5. A pirate-CD stand in Morocco. I love how, in the absence of slick corporate pre-fab logos, people hire a local painter to beautify their space and attract customers. That's the king of Morocco in the middle photo. This shop also sells soap, biscuits, and hair products.

6. *Car rapide*, the local transport in Dakar.

7. Leila Hamadi recording vocals at the Dhow Countries Music Academy in Stone Town, Zanzibar.

8. In addition to providing a display case for CDs, the top doubled as a workspace for hand-labeling and packaging CDs.

9. My favorite soundsystem of all time, at the Djemma al Fna in Marrakech, Morocco. I was interested in buying the 45s, but, when I picked one up, this guy grabbed it out of my hand, slammed it (literally) on the record player, asked me if I wanted tea or coffee, and then began playing along to the record.

10. Having had difficulty with both security and finding a place to install his studio, Makonelah found a solution in a shipping container (\$1,000 USD). Easily transported, air-conditioned, and lockable, his studio-in-a-box now resides in a

backyard of an office building in Mombasa, a suburb of Stone Town, Zanzibar.

11. Car stereo/battery-based soundsystem/shop in Georgetown.

12. My basic studio/communications setup: laptop, MIDI controller for DJing, iPod for storage and listening to all the random CDs along the way, audio interface, headphones, cell phone (100% essential) for calling and sending text messages to MCs and musicians (get a different chip in every country), high-quality microphone, and the basics, which are more or less common to hotel rooms around the world (a desk and a chair). The hard part is finding a hotel that is quiet. This is low-budget, independent, punk rock, DIY guerrilla recording.

PARTY WORLD

A DISPATCH FROM A COMPULSIVE TRAVELER WHO TRACKS URBAN SOUNDS IN TANZANIA.

WORDS ANNIE SLOAN

In Africa, everyone has their radio on from 6 a.m. until they go to sleep. Recording artists come from all over Africa—especially Kenya and Uganda—to record in Dar es Salaam, the capital of Tanzania, so that's who you hear on the radio there. And they play a lot of *bongo flava*, a mixing of hip-hop and traditional Tanzanian music (which is just called “dance music”). It's got rapping in Swahili and a tropical, percussive style, plus lots of electronic hip-hop beats. I could play it anywhere and people would think it was sick. They wouldn't think of it as “world music.”

One out of every five songs on Tanzanian radio is an American hip-hop song; I even went to an internet café called Too Short. Cab drivers who don't speak any English are bumping Ying Yang Twins and Lil Jon. It's weird to say, but it made me really proud to be an American.

But what I think is *really* cool is Congotronics, whose members are making microphones out of old car parts. But I bet *they* don't think it's cool; they're just doing it out of necessity. As it gets easier for people to record music electronically, and as things become more liberal economically, people are recording more things locally. In the future, it won't just be about the “traditional” sound of this

one country—it will be about the sound of a certain city or group of people in a city.

Everywhere I've been, the music I heard that I liked was new urban music. People say stuff like, “we're not preserving the artistic integrity of these cultures.” But if you ask someone who makes R&B in Thailand, they probably don't feel that way.

Americans are always looking for these “authentic” cultural artifacts. There's such a focus on the “underground” guide to this place, or discovering the “real” music of Syria. But that's a stagnant attitude—it's *all* authentic. You go to other places and people are obsessed with what's coming out now, what's new. They don't say, “We want to preserve our culture”; they say, “We want a car, a CD player, a better quality of life.” Young people in urban places are making music that represents their culture *now* and reflects the electronic evolution.

In America, I'm interested in music that's happening now, and fringe culture, and that's exactly what I look for when I travel to other countries. I can't wait to hear the electronic music some kid in South Korea is making on his videogame console.

WHAT IN THE WORLD?

Five acts fusing disparate styles together into something new.

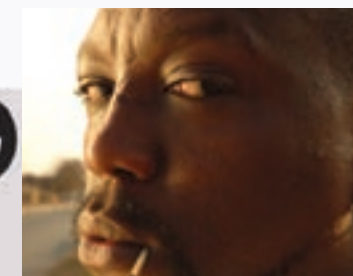


GOGOL BORDELLO

(Gypsy music + punk)

Formed in NYC's Lower East Side in 1999 by theatrical frontman Eugene Hutz, Gogol Bordello presents a calliope of accordions, fiddle, and other Eastern European instrumentation with a drunken, cabaret-like live show and plenty of punk attitude.

www.gogolbordello.com



ZOLA

(Deep house + hip-hop + African dialect and percussion)

This TV presenter/actor/rapper is one of the big guns of the South African *waito* scene, which melds raps in Xhosa and Zulu and hip-hop bluster with slowed-down deep house beats. Other notable names include Mzekezeke and Brown Dash.

www.ghettoruff.co.za



BALKAN BEAT BOX

(Klezmer + Israeli folk + dancehall + techno)

A revolving cast of musicians and vocalists—from Turkey, Israel, Morocco, and points beyond—mix Middle Eastern sounds with hip-hop and dancehall influences, throwing in the occasional Bulgarian vocal or Hebrew rap to create a Mediterranean stew of sorts.

www.balkanbeatbox.com



RUDE BWOY FACE

(Reggae/dancehall + Japanese lyrics)

This Japanese MC moves effortlessly between a high-speed ragga flow and a slower reggae/R&B sing-song, with his hard, rolling Japanese syllables fitting remarkably well over dancehall riddims (some of them from two-girl Japanese reggae soundsystem Hemo & Moofire).

www.myspace.com/rudebwoyface



BONDE DO ROLE

(Indie pop + baile funk)

Hailing from Curitiba, Brazil and now signed to Domino, this three-piece makes infectious, bobbling indie pop and rock with backbeats cribbed from Rio's Miami bass-influenced *baile funk* scene.

www.myspace.com/bondedorole



Daydream Nation

ESCAPIST AESOP ROCK LOOKS TO WESTERNS, THE BIBLE, AND ARCHAIC LANGUAGES TO FUEL HIS FANTASTIC LYRICAL VOYAGES.

WORDS PATRICK SISSON PHOTOS CHRISSEY PIPER

If you're not prepared to pay heed to rapper Aesop Rock's gravelly baritone, his complex lyrics can easily overwhelm. Reflexively branded one of hip-hop's most abstract wordsmiths, the Definitive Jux mainstay appears to operate on a different wavelength, his dense rhyme schemes relying on seemingly inscrutable verbal algorithms. But a close listen reveals a dedicated artist continually honing his craft, someone trying to convey strikingly detailed stories by way of eclectic and novel language. Before the release of his latest album, *None Shall Pass*, Aesop Rock spoke to *XLR8R* about his inspirations and the root of his creative process.

ON RELIGION:

"I went to church every week growing up in Long Island. I was raised Catholic: confirmation name, first communion, the whole nine. As much as I would kick and squirm, I always liked the language, the way people spoke during the readings and the Gospel and the wording of the Bible. I still enjoy hearing people speak like that, in a tongue that's different from your everyday year-2000 conversation."

ON LANGUAGE:

"I've always had my ear open for new words and phrasings. So many descriptive words aren't being used now—dated, almost dead ways of wording sentences that are so perfect for describing an actual scene. It's a crime vocabularies are so small, especially in lyric writing. I love

adopting older wording and applying it to modern-day New York City scenarios. That odd lexicon gives it an edge."

ON MEDIA:

"I tend to get into movies or television shows that have odd dialogue. *Deadwood* is a recent favorite—it showcased such a cryptic, mad way of talking. I went through a Western phase, watching stuff like *The Proposition*. I will literally watch any TV show or movie of any quality that deals with another time period, anything that's fantasy or sci-fi in any way, whether it's old, or awful, or for children. If I can hear one interesting sentence over the course of two hours, it's worth it. I just watched *Bridge to Terabithia*—I'm probably the only guy in the world who saw that movie. Some of my favorites are *Rushmore*

and *Brazil*. I really liked *Children of Men*. Maybe I'm just trying to run away or something. I'm up until 6 a.m. pretty much every night. At the end of the day, I try to watch a movie or a couple hours of a television show. On Demand is the greatest thing that's happened to my life. It's beaten into your head that you should read and not watch TV. I always get asked what books I've read and I don't have any answer because I'm never reading any books. I pull creative things from television and I've managed to make a lot of albums with these influences."

ON THE CREATIVE PROCESS:

"Every day, I'm writing down words and phrases. Music influences me, obviously. But as far as visuals, when I watch a movie or TV, I sit with a pen and pad taking notes, writing down lines of dialogue that interest me. My cell phone is full of notes and phrases and things I hear when I'm out. At the end of the day, I have a shitload of notes, little fragments. When it sounds cool and kind of flips off your tongue, that's the kind of hook I want. You don't have to have a car chase to have an awesome story, as long as you can find a cool way to describe things. It's as deep as you want to make it."

ON DRUGS:

"The song 'Greatest Pac-Man Victory of All Time' (which contained a series of phrases constructed from words starting with L, S, or D) is a pretty specific song about a specific summer where I did a specific amount of acid [laughs]. I reference pot, but I don't even smoke that often. I talk a lot about pills because that's what this generation can relate to, and I've had my ups and downs dealing with pills. I've been on them over the last six or seven years to treat anxiety, depression, and sleep issues. I hated it

the entire time. I've ended up running the gamut of prescription medication, which I'm not proud of, but it's a reality. I've gotten sick from pills that failed, that didn't react well to my body, and none of this is recreational. It's a struggle. I don't ever rhyme about it being cool to take pills. I should be happy and I am happy, in general. I have a pretty good life, I have a wife, I'm an adult, I made it to my 30s without dying, and I have a lot of stuff to be happy about, but still there are these weird struggles. For every guy that doesn't go to a shrink and finds this topic confusing, I assure you it's more confusing actually being involved in it. You start to feel like a slave to the medication. You get the feeling you're in a coma, kind of a zombie. I think it's directly related to my love for movies and TV shows that are fantastical. You feel like you're doing the same thing—at the end of every day you swallow your pills and go about your shit. Anything that's remotely fantastical is a separate thing, a departure. Maybe it's related somehow to my lyrics, trying to be a little bugged out, being super-embellished and exaggerated, telling every story like it's a tall tale whether it is or not."

ON LYRICS AND IMAGERY:

"When you decide to be a rapper and you're young, you carry around this competition and braggadocio, and it's dope. But I don't care at this point. I don't think I have anything to prove. I don't like music when I feel like someone is talking at you. Inherently with rap, you're being talked at. That definitely has a place, and I've done that for so long. I'd rather engage and paint this picture and involve the listener. When I was 20, I was doing this real machine-gun delivery. Now, it's all an effort to deliver the words in the greatest

way they can be delivered. My favorite people paint a picture in few words, guys like Tom Waits, John Darnielle, and Cage. I don't want any preachiness or my opinions on politics or religion. I want to subtract me from the equation. I don't want to talk at people anymore."

ON PAINTING:

"I used paint and draw eight or 10 hours a day. That was my shit. That's what I went to college for, against my mother's best wishes. I majored in oil painting. Everyday, I was told I wasn't going to get a job painting. Turns out, Mom was right. When I was painting, I did large-scale, realistic portraits and figures. It's odd. I never wanted to paint abstractly. I always wanted to be incredibly accurate, harness my skills and train myself. That's what I feel I'm doing with my lyrics. The world wants to stamp me as this abstract lyricist and I feel like I'm doing the opposite. I'm trying to pay such close attention to detail and verbiage in an attempt to be even more realistic."

ON TEACHING CHILDREN:

"I've been going back and forth about teaching a class at 826 Valencia, an organization that teaches creative writing to children. I'm nervous. I'm trying to get over the fear of standing in front of children and trying to act like I know something. I've officially hit this point where I'm trying to live off of music and art. I have this inner desire to reach out to this younger generation and tell them, 'It's okay to be confused; here's how some of it works, if you're interested. You don't have to be a banker your whole life if you don't want to be.'"

Aesop Rock's *None Shall Pass* is out August 28 on Def Jux. www.myspace.com/aesoprockwins, www.definitivejux.net

"I want to subtract me from the equation. I don't want to talk *at* people anymore."





OMG! WTF?

STYLIST: Valissa Yoe • PHOTOGRAPHER: Shiloh Crawford III
(www.shilohcrawford.com) • MAKEUP: Stephanie Perez
Hair: Mariah Brinton • MODELS: Alyssa, Melissa (*Elite*),
Britney (*Elite*), Patrick the Captain, and Nick the Dude.

THIS SPREAD : Alyssa wears
Love Brigade jumper +
earrings, *Mishka* t-shirt.

PREVIOUS SPREAD : Patrick wears
Name Ribbot t-shirt + necklace,
Tripp NYC for Trash & Vaudeville
jeans, *Vans* sneakers, stylist's
own sunglasses.

OMG!
WTF?

SO SO
TWO TA
TWO T!



GO BUBBLE DUM!

(MEGA-HYPHY!!)



OMG!
WTF?!

Britney wears *Laura Dawson* animal print hoodie, *Versace* neon jeans, *Adidas* high-tops.

Nick wears *Mishka* hoodie, *Paul Frank* t-shirt, *Name Ribbon* sweatpants, *P.F. Flyers* sneakers

TALK DA HAND!



OMG!
WTF?

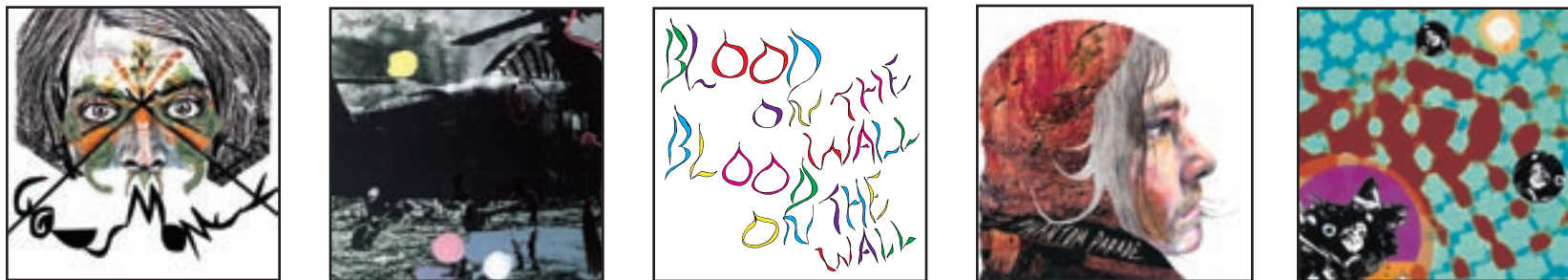
Melissa wears *Valissa Yoe*
hoodie dress.

Patrick wears *XLR8R x New Era*
hat, *Love Brigade* t-shirt, *Kill City* pants,
stylist's own sunglasses



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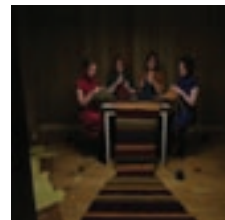


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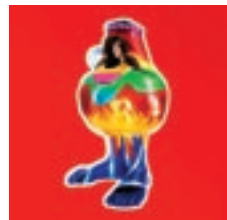


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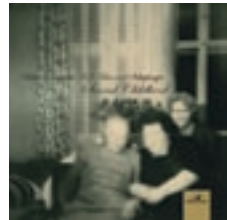
Amiina



ICE PRINCESSES, AND THE NEW MUSICAL FACE OF REYKJAVIK.



AMIINA KURR Ever/US/CD



BJÖRK VOLTA Elektra/US/CD

HILDUR GUDNADOTTIR/BJ NILSEN/STILLUPPSTEYPA SECOND CHILDHOOD Quecksilber/GER/CD

It may not account for why so many death metal bands hail from Florida, but artists often make music that's a reflection of both their interior and exterior landscapes—Björk compared a lover's moods to an erupting volcano in "Possibly Maybe," and in her video for "Joga," she sings of being manipulated by "emotional landscapes" while a map of ever-changing terrain reveals itself as Iceland in the final frame.

There's a reason people use the word "glacial" to describe Iceland's musical exports. The country's pop and experimental sounds are icy and crisp: Using chamber instruments and electronics, artists create subdued, twinkling compositions that are beautiful and lonesome, bringing to mind the Northern lights; vocals are often sung in childlike broken English or imaginary languages. But does this represent the nation's prevailing musical aesthetic? Three of the country's recent offerings suggest that while there is a unifying Icelandic sound, the island's main cultural exports remain wholly distinct from one another.

On Björk's seventh studio album, *Volta*, the ex-Sugarcube returns to the high-energy material that was last heard on 1995's *Post*. Since then, her music has seemed built around the subtler sparks of her private life (the overtly romantic *Vespertine*) and high-concept art (the all-vocal *Medulla*). *Volta*, with a typically eclectic group of contributors including Mark Bell, Timbaland, and lounge diva Antony Hegerty, isn't perfect—in fact, a lot of the guests' pieces get buried in the mix—but it's a lot of fun. Timbaland's beat for "Innocence" is bare bones, with a rough "Uh!" subbing for the kick-drum. Björk layers Congolese percussion ensemble Konono No. 1's amplified thumb pianos over it and grants the track one of the album's best vocal melodies. This time, her moods seem to be on the surface. Content with family but mistrustful of government and religion, she makes many of *Volta's* songs, like "Declare Independence," ecstatic rallying cries. Once

again, Björk uses globalization to her advantage, finding an authentic voice that's nevertheless affected by the rest of the world's noise.

The four women of Amiina met at music school in Reykjavik, and found early success as Sigur Rós' string section in 1999. On *Kurr* (Icelandic for "coo"), they play everything: toothless and bowed saws, guitars, pianos, bells, synths, even wine glasses, and add fairy-like vocals to a few of their songs. Much more interesting than their previous instrumental EP, *Kurr* shares much in common with Denmark's Efterklang; their magical sound now seeming more Scandinavian than specifically Icelandic. Songs like "Rugla" and "Glamur" unfold with Theremin-like whooshes, patient violins, and bell tones—like something to get lost in. A marching snare drum meets harpsichord and a wordless chorus to create a chamber-pop feel that's almost reverent. Recalling the best of Múm but with their own style, Amiina has lovingly crafted a modern debut from sounds that are anything but.

"It's About the Size of a House," the first of six tracks on *Second Childhood*, headed up by cellist Hildur Guðnadóttir with sound sculptors BJ Nilsen and Stillupsteypa, further expands Iceland's musical boundaries with 18 minutes of ominous cello tones and white noise, abruptly cutting out at the seven-minute mark to take a creepy look inward. A faint melodic hum takes over and new instruments are ushered in to continue the theme, uplifting the mood just a little. It's a change from Björk and Amiina, to say the least. When compared to *Volta* and *Kurr*, this collaboration feels the most introspective of the lot, covering rough mental and emotional terrain and proving to be as equally beautiful and inhospitable as the Scandinavian landscape itself. *Rachel Shimp*



Mogwai

MOGWAI ZIDANE: A 21ST CENTURY PORTRAIT (ORIGINAL SOUNDTRACK) Rock Action/UK/CD

The greatest instro-rock band on earth soundtracks a film about one of European football's infamous titans, and the result is a win for all. Not just because Mogwai remains one of the most cinematic musical groups in existence, but also because, astoundingly, they've never officially scored a film before. Although they can bring the noise, *Zidane* is a mostly mellow affair, hearkening back to their early EPs. "Black Spider," "Terrific Speech 2," "Half Time," and "Wake Up and Go Berserk" are meditative soundscapes, spare with loose arpeggios and shimmering distortions. "Terrific Speech" itself is a mounting pleasure, while "7:25" is a sparkling stream of plucked melodies. But it wouldn't be Mogwai without an experimental noise epic, and that comes in the form of the half-hour opus "Black Spider 2," an ambient mash of feedback, synths, and guitars that unspools into static-soaked riffs. Mogwai shoots, *Zidane* scores. *Scott Thill*



10 FT. GANGSTA PLANT EVERYTHING UNDER THE SUN ROIR/US/CD

If you never heard the classic rock steady reggae of Trojan records, or the deep dub of Lee "Scratch" Perry, then shame on you. However, picking up this reissue of 10 Ft. Ganja Plant's debut will leave listeners feeling content. One should become well acquainted with the masters, and perhaps you need such a background to fully appreciate 10 Ft.'s retro sound, but it's as if these guys listened to the oldies so you don't have to. Comprised of members of roots-oriented outfit John Brown's Body (lead singer Kevin Kinsella appears here), Ganja Plant is more spliffed out and fun, but no less serious; just check "Politricking Man." *Daniel Siewek*



AESOP ROCK NONE SHALL PASS Definitive Jux/US/CD

Def Jux's surreal street poet has gotten married and recorded a Swoosh-sponsored exercise soundtrack since his last full-length, so perhaps it's not surprising that *None Shall Pass* loosely focuses on maturity. Adulthood's arrival hasn't made Aesop Rock go soft, though Blockhead's production here is looser and more jazz-inflected. Instead Aesop comes nostalgic, with tales of bored youth, isolation, and drug-spoiled relationships. He still unwinds his knotty lyrics, slacking off paid-by-the-syllable wordplay for a more stretched-out delivery with more dramatic effect. He rarely sounds as hurried (and exciting) as he did on his magnum opus *Labor Days*, but he's closer than he has been in years. *Patrick Sisson*

ARCHITECTURE IN HELSINKI PLACES LIKE THIS Polyvinyl/US/CD

Call this sextet "indie-pop" if you must, but that's a mighty narrow definition. With instruments usually relegated to music's margins (glockenspiel, tuba), Architecture in Helsinki has always been quirky, but on their third studio album, an international feel takes them beyond their Australian roots. Steel drums give "Heart It Races" a calypso feel, while "Like It or Not"'s boozey horns feel like distilled summer over lyrics about New York heat. Throughout there's a frenetic energy, highlighted by Cameron Bird's and Kellie Sutherland's vocals, which get almost screechy in their enthusiasm. Sometimes the album threatens to careen out of control, but the band generally pulls back in time. Playful and intense, the record takes the band somewhere new—and worth exploring. *Luciana Lopez*

ARTHUR & YU IN CAMERA Hardly Art/US/CD

As the flagship act for Sub Pop's new Hardly Art sub-imprint, Arthur & Yu's debut, *In Camera*, is a solid collection of consistent indie rock played through a classic-rock lens. Seattle multi-instrumentalists Grant Olsen and Sonya Westcott recall luminaries like the Velvet Underground and Serge Gainsbourg along with modern acts like Black Mountain and Devendra Banhart. The opener, "Absurd Heroes Manifesto," builds on subdued guitars and ethereal harmonies, while "There Are Too Many Birds" employs a full band for its driving, addictive melody. Along with the duo's stellar songwriting, the album is strengthened by warm production that gives the record an antique vibe. Eternally laid-back, *In Camera* will inspire summer naps and lazy Sundays forever. *Josiah Hughes*

AVEY TARE AND KRIA BREKKAN PULLHAIR RUBEYE Paw Tracks/US/CD

A bad idea is a bad idea—even when it's borne of the best intentions. So when indie super-couple Avey Tare and Kria Brekkan (of Animal Collective and Múm, respectively) decided to reverse every track on their already-obtuse debut *Pullhair Rubeye*, the world cringed. Still, it's a shame many critics have been too caught up in finger-pointing and idea-damning to notice that, forwards or backwards, the textures and melodies of this album tend towards transcendent. So when the "beat" unfurls clumsily underneath Brekkan's vocal trapeze act on "Sis Around the Sandmill," try not to correct it mentally (or manually, as some idle hands already have). Instead, stop to marvel at the occasional beauty of a stupid, stupid decision. *Robbie Mackey*

BROTHER READE RAP MUSIC Record Collection/US/CD

Declaring "I know you want to live in the past/But right here/This is where you're at/So let's go," fluid MC Jimmy Jamz sets the tone for the fresh, rough-around-the-edges debut of this L.A. hip-hop duo. With a loose approach and adolescent-like swagger, the pair possesses back-and-forth chemistry and enforced lyrical ability, with Jamz casually commanding the mic. Producer/DJ Bobby Evans' assured, lo-fi production slinks by, the booming beats often setting up a one-two shuffle recalling a grittier Nicolay fiddling with budget-bin synths. Back-to-back jams "The Marcie Song" and "Work Ain't for Players" bubble up with goeey, elastic melodies, while "Everywhere I Go" slowly grinds. *Patrick Sisson*

CHROMEO FANCY FOOTWORK Vice/US/CD

Chroméo's Dave One and P-Thugg ardently reject being labeled an ironic band, but as with 2004's *She's in Control*, it's hard not to notice a knowing wink spread throughout *Fancy Footwork*'s 11 tracks of sex-fueled funk boogie. But why is that such a bad thing? The album's squiggly analog synth breaks, call-and-response vocoder hooks, and b-boy electro consistently sounds more fun than funny, more danceable than laughable. *Footwork* may wear its adoration for New Edition's adolescent, skirt-chasing romanticism on its sleeve, but it's also a fantastic pop album on its own terms. *Ross Holland*

DATAROCK DATAROCK DATAROCK Nettwerk/US/CD

I have no idea who Datarock is—they seem to resemble 13 different bands on this reissue of their 2005 debut. A swank disco number is followed by a department-store house tune that declares it's every woman, which is followed by Hot Chip and "Weird" Al Yankovic remaking *Grease*. . . the costume changes never cease. Neither do geeky lyrics like, "I ran into her in computer camp/Was that in '84?/Not sure/I had my Commodore 64/I had to score," but vocalist Fredrik Saroea's campiness still sells it well. Stereotypical "nerdcore" moments like "Sex Me Up" reign, and the lounge serenade "Ganguro Girl" rehashes the '90s nostalgia for the '70s. But that doesn't mean these guys don't know how to entertain. *Cameron Macdonald*

DAN DEACON SPIDERMAN OF THE RINGS Carpark/US/CD

A member of Baltimore art collective Wham City, Dan Deacon built his reputation with floor-shaking live performances of manic, homemade electro-pop stitched together with ramshackle equipment. He brings the same spastic energy to *Spiderman of the Rings*, an inventive (albeit wacky) recording that whips distorted chipmunk vocals and hyperactive synths into impossibly catchy party anthems. Fortunately, Deacon's ear for structure and melody counterbalance the album's ADD qualities, and *Spiderman* ultimately succeeds as a result of that symmetry. The record stumbles briefly when Deacon slows down between bangers, as on the twee-ambient "Big Milk," but the finest tracks here—"The Crystal Cat" and "Okie Dokie"—make for pure celebration, tweaked out in the best possible way. *Joe Cally*

DEADBEAT JOURNEYMAN'S ANNUAL ~scape/GER/CD

Montreal producer Deadbeat has forged a formidable body of digital dub sweetness for Stefan Betke's ~scape, imbuing the Jamaican art form with poignancy and microscopic textural grit redolent of electronic music's most advanced labs. His fifth album, *Journeyman's Annual*, bears a richer sound than past Deadbeat full-lengths: thicker bass frequencies, more spacious high-end bric-a-brac, crisper beats, and more varied rhythms. *Journeyman's Annual* is also more emotionally and stylistically diverse. "Refund Me" features MC Bubbz rapping over hectic dancehall with crushing bass pressure and rampant cowbell clatter. "Lost Luggage" incorporates dubstep's bleak, pitch-black atmospheres, while the cavernous and metallicly oscillating "Loneliness and Revelry" sounds like a collaboration between Burial and Maurizio. This is anything but journeyman stuff. *Dave Segal*

MATTHEW DEAR ASA BREED Ghostly International/US/CD

In his laid-back Texan (via Detroit) way, Matthew Dear seems hell-bent on becoming a pop star. Already a fixture on magazine covers—including *XLR8RS*—the recent NY transplant continues to refine his singer-songwriter skills on *Asa Breed*—which portends another flurry of photo shoots and interviews. While many electronic artists incorporating vocals and song-based tropes come off as saccharine or excessively introverted, Dear strikes a satisfying balance between catchiness and adventurousness. Singing in desultory, Smog-like tones about love's perplexing complications, he changes up the rhythms and textural embellishments, avoiding ruts with charm and grace. The subliminal, hypnotic pulse that ran through Dear's breakout track "Dog Days" recurs in varying degrees here, too, enlivening songs that already have plenty of tang. *Dave Segal*

KATHY DIAMOND MISS DIAMOND TO YOU Permanent Vacation/GER/CD

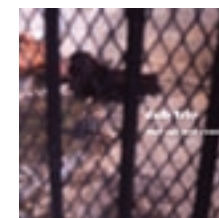
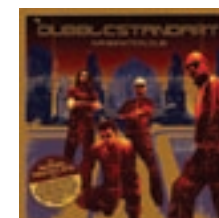
Kathy Diamond is the diva standard-bearer in the new disco movement. But on *Miss Diamond to You*, it's producer Maurice Fulton's penchant for tight disco drums, bubbling congas, boogie slap basslines, and dirty funk keys that shines through, creating a colorful canvas for Diamond's Chaka Khan-esque vocals to take a lead role. Standouts like "Over" recall Stevie Wonder at his funkier while simultaneously lifting listeners into a whirlwind of deep organs and twinkling strings, and lovingly depositing them in a new stratosphere of cosmic boogie. Other notable moments include the supersonic *batucada* of "Until the Sun Goes Down" and the slo-mo filtered soul of "On & On." *Joshua P. Ferguson*

DUBBLESTANDART IMMIGRATION DUB Collision/US/CD

While singers usually get all the credit, there's often far more pressure on the backing band to come through, and Vienna-based Dubblestandart has backed some of reggae's finest, including Lee Perry and Dillinger. *Immigration Dub* marks their tenth full-length recording, and their opening sentiment—"We're stoned!" proclaimed over and over in the horn-laden, deep drum mix—is a quick indicator as to who king is. (Namely, bass.) The low-end is the band's seductive, not-so-shy trademark. And when the likes of Ken Boothe, Prince Far I, and Ari Up find their way inside, it's a party you can't miss. The decibels emanating from this soundsystem are simply unavoidable. *Derek Beres*

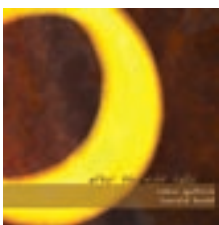
DUB TRIO COOL OUT AND COEXIST ROIR/US/CD

Blending moody dub musings with stomping power chords and the odd burst of thrash rock, Dub Trio emerged a few years back as abstract instrumentalists picking up where Bad Brains and Faith No More left off. *Cool Out and Coexist*, a live set recently recorded at Brooklyn's Union Pool, sees the band shifting several gears towards the heavy-metal end of the spectrum, with most tracks now defined by DP Holmes' screeching guitar; one gets a sense of their powerful impact on stage, and even if the disc is slightly less subtle than its studio predecessors, fans of their live sets will not be disappointed. *David Katz*



I AM SPOONBENDER BUY HIDDEN PERSUADERS Seismic Séance/US/CD

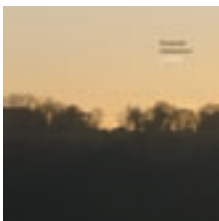
Hyper-conceptualized (at least on its mascara-streaked face) electro-goth combo I Am Spoonbender's long-awaited return outdoes even their 1999 three-sided LP *Teletwin*. Advertised as a subliminal advertisement for itself (also available for free download), *Buy Hidden Persuaders*, released here as a gatefold CD, is a paranoid commentary on losing oneself in ad saturation. The music tends toward a vocal-heavy, noise-shattered shade of IAS' early "new wave" synth-pop. In her finest half-there dramatics Robynn "Cup" Iwata sings, "We all need mirrors to know who we are now" after a layered noise break, which may or not be part of IAS' own ad campaign. . . Of course, we'll never know, and that's the punchline to this San Francisco group's recurring, in-joke. But the real joke remains: Can IAS really "sell" listeners a free album? *Michael Byrne*



FENNEZ/SAKAMOTO
CENDRE

Touch/UK/CD

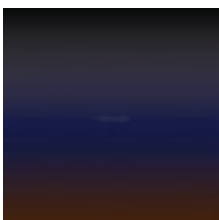
On *Cendre*, Christian Fennesz plants a forest for composer Ryuichi Sakamoto to get lost in. The Austrian fuzz abstractionist sets down his usual bed of serene guitar and digital noise that fogs the air while Sakamoto's piano melodies delicately fall into the ether. Ambient artists may have trod similar ground in the past, but there are still sublime moments. Fennesz draws most of the attention—his vivid timbres prick the skin like dusk sunlight on “Kokoro,” and his guitar drones walk skyward on “Amorph.” The only weakness is that Sakamoto's loud piano sometimes intrudes on Fennesz's soft ambient backgrounds. Still, *Cendre* is a fine soundtrack for watching the day end. *Cameron Macdonald*



HANS FJELLESTAD
SNAILS R SEXY

Accretions/US/CD

Based on Hans Fjellestad's eye-goggling/tongue-lashing cover shots, Eastern medicine practitioners might worry for his health, but the L.A.-based musician/filmmaker is quite sturdy—if his sound is any indication. Following Fjellestad's Robert Moog documentary, that synthesizer became Fjellestad's preferred weapon and *Snails R Sexy* echoes the machine's experimental analog brawn. This is the soundtrack for the occasionally rain-soaked streets of L.A. after dark, when the city hums and grinds behind glittery scenes. Fjellestad makes noise for the stout-hearted—his snails cuddle up to Sun Ra's keyboard explosions, Merzbow's drones, and Buckethead's string histrionics. Gloss these shells with '70s-era Krautrock and buff with Japanese and Norwegian death metal (the subject of Fjellestad's next documentary), and they are dead sexy. *Stacy Meyn*



FRIDGE
SUN

Temporary Residence/US/CD

Six years have passed since we last heard from London's post-everything poster children, Fridge. But Four Tet's Kieran Hebden, Adem's Adem Ilhan, and Sam Jeffers are better off for the wait on their fifth full-length, *Sun*. Picking up where the trio left off with 2001's stubbornly abstract and innocently visionary *Happiness*, but with the added confidence of some hard-earned solo success, *Sun* is a far more concentrated blend of electronics and acoustics, post-rock, and avant-laptop theatrics. Even so, it manages to genre-hop with the best of them: slinking from the shiny jungle funk of the title track, to the Beefheart-y “Eyelids,” the asteroid-saddling “Comets,” and the towering stack of Mogwai on “Lost Time.” *Robbie Mackey*

ROBIN GUTHRIE AND HAROLD BUDD
AFTER THE NIGHT FALLS

Darla/US/CD

Poignant sonics occur whenever these two ambient maestros get together, whether for the classic Cocteau Twins side project *The Moon and the Melodies* or Guthrie and Budd's rewarding soundtrack for the film *Mysterious Skin*. This time around, the spare atmospheres of Harold Budd take precedent, especially on the very understated “How Distant Your Heart” and “Avenue of Shapes.” Guthrie's ethereal guitar sneaks in here and there on tracks like “She Is My Strength” and bare beats pulse lightly on “Seven Thousand Sunny Years,” but this collaboration still remains their most sedate yet. Use it when you want to chill or space, especially at a glacial pace. *Scott Thill*

JPLS

TWILITE

Minus/GER/CD

Jeremy Jacobs wants nothing to do with the minimal-gone-maximal trend. The Indiana-based artist is the newest addition to Minus' stable, and as JPLS he makes the label's most sparse and restrained techno. Previously he has been unconcerned with making heads nod, choosing instead to focus on production and mood. But this, his first LP, finds a happy medium between thinking and thumping. “Twilite 3,” a light-hearted take on minimalist tech-house, belongs early in the night, and “Twilite 8” is an acidic blip fest of peak-hour proportions. Jacobs' vision always allows both the songs and the sounds to breathe, hinting at the idea that space really is the place. *Cameron Octigan*

TALIB KWELI
EAR DRUM

Blacksmith-Warner Bros./US/CD

Not too many rappers can namedrop authors Gabriel Garcia Márquez and Jean Auel and still sound funky, but Brooklyn-raised MC Talib Kweli pulls it off on the debut for his own Blacksmith Records. On “Hostile Gospel,” Kweli's razor-sharp rhymes address the state of a hip-hop dis-union that's trapped in an identity crisis. (Guest—and recent Blacksmith signee—Jean Grae references Nas on the will.i.am-produced “Say Something” by saying “Hip-hop is not dead/It's on vacation.”) On “More or Less,” Kweli and Hi-Tek reunite to prescribe an action plan for a more perfect union, while he and UGK kick it like “Country Cousins” as they travel down hip-hop's memory lane. A rejuvenated look for one of rap's premier intellectuals. *James Mayo*

JEAN-FRANCOIS LAPORTE
SOUNDMATTERS

23five/US/CD

On *Soundmatters*, Canadian sound artist Jean-Francois Laporte magnifies life in unexpected places. Wind noises cut through roof shingles and skin in his recordings of a Montreal ice storm in the mesmerizing “Électro-Prana,” while on “Ventre du Dragon” he uncovers 15 seconds of natural reverb inside an empty cargo ship, where droning brass horns sound like boats being swallowed up by fog. Laporte also indulges in dissonant excursions that challenge attention spans, namely the shrill 26 minutes of a skating rink's cooling compressor on “Mantra,” and the sax and drums that struggle to fly in the nightmarish closer “Plentitude du Vide.” Fortunately, his noises that whisper still speak louder to the soul. *Cameron Macdonald*

HÅKAN LIDBO
DUNKA DUNKA

Musick/GER/CD

Sometimes it's fun to hear artists spank themselves with the crazy stick. Luckily for Swede Håkan Lidbo, “crazy” sounds pretty darn good. From its bloodied cover art to frenzied, aggro rhythms running like a nun on crack throughout, *Dunka Dunka* offers a dark respite from the shiny, pop-centric tech-house stylings that Lidbo also does so well. In classic Lidbo fashion, *Dunka*'s off-kilter distortion feels playful and controlled under this producer's masterful hand: “Half Man Half Lobster” punctuates noisy beat-clattering with a slow, harmonic ascension, only to melt into a swerving synth web. Sanity, after all, is somewhat overrated. *Janet Tzou*

LINDSTRØM & PRINS THOMAS
REINTERPRETATIONS

Eskimo/NOR/CD

Adorned with block-print owls, frogs, squirrels, and fish, the cover of Norwegian nerds Lindstrøm and Prins Thomas' latest disc practically screams “stoner disco.” Like a backwoods camping soundtrack for VW bus club kids, the album is a collection of alternate mixes, 12” versions, edits, and jammy retro-house, replete with vintage drum sequencers and live bass noodling. But if you take this trip, bring two weeks' extra rations—“Nummer Fire En” clocks in at 21 minutes, “Turkish Delight” at 10 and change. Prog-folk influenced “Vrang Og Vanskelig” conjures forest gnome visions, while the cheese-organ-saturated “Feel PM” drifts dangerously into *Love Boat* waters. Overall, *Reinterpretations* sounds like Norse disko-goes-lite rock: familiar and soothing, but too limp to fuck with. *Tomas Palermo*

LODEN

VALEEN HOPE

Mush/US/CD

Let's not overlook the effect of shoegazers like My Bloody Valentine, Ride, or Swervedriver on non-rock music. Take the smeared laptop watercolors and coarse, bristled sounds of Loden's full-length Mush debut, *Valeen Hope*, for example. You'd be forgiven for assuming the album's varied timbres were all pulsing through a dozen tweaked effects pedals. But you'd be wrong. Instead, Loden borrows the production palate of many a Mush stalwart, dropping churned, IDM-inspired programming, but tenderizing the end results to *Loveless*-like (or at least *Dead Cities*-like) textures. In terms of songwriting, Loden's compositions never touch the fucked-pop grandeur of MBV. But in terms of M83-sized sonic waves, *Valeen Hope* is a slab of screengazer perfection. *Robbie Mackey*

TIM MAIA

NOBODY CAN LIVE FOREVER: THE EXISTENTIAL SOUL OF TIM MAIA

Luaka Bop/US/CD

There's no shortage of excess in the roster of the world's great soul singers, and Brazilian singer Tim Maia is no exception: In his 55 years on earth, the singer, at his height in the '70s, survived drug use, a UFO cult, and five marriages. Of course, such a messed-up personal life can be an excellent foundation for good music, and in this sense Maia excelled as well. Though this collection includes English music, his rich, honey-smooth voice sounds best when he sings in his native Portuguese, layered against thick basslines and psych guitars. Even if you speak Portuguese, the depth in his voice makes the meaning of the words a moot point. *Luciana Lopez*

MONTAG

GOING PLACES

Carpark/US/CD

Like many Carpark artists, Canadian Antoine “Montag” Bédard's music sounds much grander than his humble indie status might suggest. *Going Places* is Bédard's third full-length and it expands upon his previous minimalist aesthetic: bright, pop-infused electronics sparkle, glistening with rich touches of piano keys and symphonic strings. Bédard borrows heavily from '60s psychedelic pop: “Safe In Sound” and “Hands Off, Creature!” overflow with exuberance and trippy flourishes, while his opening cut, “I Have Sound,” offers a sweeping love letter to electronic '60s-style pop. But his talent lies in framing intimate feelings that resonate, nicely evidenced in his simple, stirring refrain from “I Have Sound”: “*We have no time for life/But we have sound/We have sound.*” Nuff said. *Janet Tzou*

MUSAB

THE SLICK'S BOX

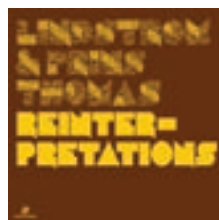
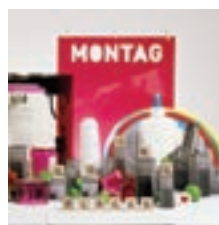
Hieroglyphics Imperium/US/CD

Before Atmosphere became a known quantity, it was Musab who helped set things off for Rhymesayers and put Minnesota on the hip-hop map. While no longer rolling with the RSE family that he helped cultivate, this smooth-talking MC, also known as Minnesota Slicks, is still dropping gems. On his Hiero Imperium debut, Musab often plays the role of the street-wise pimp, and he does so pretty well. “My team took all the clientele from Heidi Fleiss,” he boasts on the standout, *Superfly*-inspired “Please Do Not Assume.” Sab does successfully step out of mack mode from time to time, but he and his producer King Karnov shine most when their beats and rhymes are larger-than-life. *Max Herman*

MY SISTER KLAUS
CHATEAU ROUGE

Tigersushi/FRA/CD

Paris, especially in the wake of Ed Banger and Kitsuné, is easily imagined as a ceaseless rampage of chic-meets-shabby funk, where cocaine-rimmed martinis float on seas of demitasse-sized pupils. But amidst the blitz, Guillaume Teyssier has recorded an album acknowledging the *true* origins of skuzz. This Joakim-produced Petri dish fetishizes everything captivating about New York's Lower East Side from 1965 (ie. The Velvet Underground's debut) through the roiling early '80s. The diffused pastiche draws on Lou Reed, Suicide, Rhys Chatham, and Talking Heads, plus dashes of honorary New Yorkers David Bowie and Iggy Pop. A wanton strut anchors the most sodden eddies, on this chameleonic effort of psyche-rock squalor and squall. *Tony Ware*



Slam

SLAM
HUMAN RESPONSE

Soma/UK/CD

As heads of Glasgow's Soma imprint, with a fierce gigging schedule that would make the most dedicated clubgoer beg for a disco nap, Slam's Stuart McMillan and Orde Meikle have made it their jobs to live the never-ending party. Despite a few faltering downtempo ditties (oddly, their ambient is never quite as interesting as their 4/4 pieces, despite being so adept at integrating atmospherics), Slam's fourth full-length, *Human Response*, delivers on this duo's percussive-cum-melodic tech-house—all satisfyingly steeped with rhythmic funk. “Staccato Rave” is *Response*'s most adventurous track, with angular beats swerving from one razor-sharp edge to the next; long, safe build-ups on “Azure” track the big-room club sound; and “We're Not Here,” the disc's strongest cut, could be the ultimate dewy trance hit for the 2 a.m. sweaty masses. Maybe Slam has it right—life is just a party, after all. *Janet Tzou*

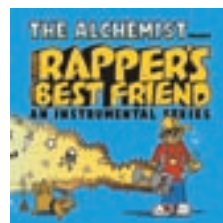


Klute

KLUTE
THE EMPEROR'S NEW CLOTHES

Commercial Suicide/UK/CD

Tom Withers must be damn near the most prolific drum & bass artist in the United Kingdom. When not releasing inspired and imaginative double albums (*Emperor* is his third since 2003), he creates a forum for similarly punk- and techno-informed artists like Amit and Break on his Commercial Suicide label, and writes b-sides like “Most People Are Dicks” in the meantime. A degree of misanthropy may drive this busybody, whose voice is vital in more than one scene. “Learning Curve” seems to slow and alter a riff from the defunct, bad-ass band Refused, where its flipside, “Hell Hath No Fury,” is nine minutes of sun and glitter. Breakbeat and downtempo tracks share space with songs like “Come Back 2 Me,” as deep and emotional as a drum & bass tune can get. Withers' restlessness has produced another long-player of staggering diversity. It's not necessarily to be swallowed whole, but there's something here for everyone to chew on. *Rachel Shimp*



PEOPLE PRESS PLAY
PEOPLE PRESS PLAY
 Morr Music/GER/CD

Germany's People Press Play is very much the sum of their four creative parts. The members are veterans of electronic outfits Dub Tractor, Opiate, Acustic, and Savery, and combined they make sleepy, IDM-pop anchored by Sara Savery's feathery vocals. The group incorporates elements of their other projects (dub techno bass, brittle drum loops, luxuriant synth programming) but wisely adds live guitar, bass, and acoustic instruments that make each song uniquely tuned. While sonically similar to recordings by Barbara Morgenstern, Lali Puna, or Dntel, the self-titled album achieves its own gradually unfolding authenticity. If your ears crave some hazy, digital shoegazer bliss, press play now. *Tomas Palermo*

OMAR RODRIGUEZ-LOPEZ
SE DICE BISONTE, NO BUFALO
 Gold Standard Laboratories/US/CD

Noise tweaker and guitar god Omar Rodriguez-Lopez pushed the envelope harder on his last solo effort *A Manual Dexterity: Soundtrack Volume One*. But give the guy a break, as this is just one of four albums The Mars Volta honcho wrote and recorded while in Amsterdam in 2005. Featuring *Amputechre* apocrypha and Omar's upcoming soundtrack for the film *El Bufalo de la Noche*, this disc is a mash of tracks and time signatures. "The Lukewarm" and "Luxury of Infancy" are short experiments with

sound effects and guitar leads, while the psych-rock "Rapid Fire Tollbooth," a fan favorite, finally gets laid down on disc for posterity. Prog has never rocked so hard. *Scott Thill*

MARK RONSON
VERSION
 RCA/US/CD

Rebounding from the commercial failure of his 2003 debut *Here Comes the Fuzz*, producer Mark Ronson steps out from the gleaming spotlight of the vindicating successes of producing Lily Allen and Amy Winehouse to issue this brilliant sophomore bag of renditions with retro flair. Ronson unabashedly jacks tunes from Coldplay, The Smiths, and Radiohead, retrofitting them with a sublime, '60s Northern soul swagger replete with full horn sections and dusty kicks and snares. In addition to Winehouse and Allen, this throwback jamboree includes guests Kenna, Robbie Williams, and newcomer Daniel Merriweather. His cover of Britney Spears' "Toxic," laced with fatback brass and throwaway verses from ODB, is worth the price of admission to this hucklebuckin' Wigan Casino affair. *Rico "Superbizee" Washington*

SOMEONE ELSE
PEN CAPS AND COLORED PENCILS
 Foundsound/US/CD

After a long stint in psychedelic drone-pop unit Flowchart, Philadelphia producer Someone Else (Sean O'Neal) has ascended swiftly to minimal techno's upper echelon, placing tracks on Michael Mayer's *Immer 2* and Richie Hawtin's *DE9 / Transitions* mixes. O'Neal further enhances his rep with this outstanding debut solo album. *Pen Caps and Colored Pencils* abounds with dark yet quirky minimal techno marked by what Nurse With Wound would call "The Strange Play of the Mouth." Jocular vocal manipulations pepper sexily slithering tracks that are atwitter with strange textural sounds, turning dance floors into funhouses. Like fellow North American techno luminaries Bruno Pronsato and Akufen, Someone Else specializes in crazy-angled, rubber-roomed club bangers that provoke both dancing and laughter. *Dave Segal*

SOULPHONIC SOUND SYSTEM
VOLUME ONE
 Convincing Woodgrain/US/CD

As sonically sharp as DJ Santo's and Chauncey Canfield's beats are on *Volume One*, it's the guest vocals that are this album's saving grace. Meshing breakbeats, jazz horns, and Latin flare is a painfully typical formula, and, as such, tracks like "Dossaba" and "Nutmeg" are completely forgettable. "Make It Stop" and "The One" are the sole highpoints, containing charming female vocals that flutter nicely with the production. Although the Portland duo can blend diverse styles cohesively, the songs are repetitive ("Motanica"), uninteresting ("Mr. Sparkle"), and mechanical ("Underwater Circuits"). *Volume One* sounds like every other lounge comp you've heard recently, and proves that possessing technical know-how isn't enough. *David Ma*

THE ALCHEMIST
RAPPER'S BEST FRIEND
 Decon/US/CD

Once upon a time The Alchemist was a teenaged rapper alongside now-famous actor Scott Caan (in *The Whooliganz*); today he stands as one of the most sought-after producers in hip-hop. Al's latest instrumental release, *Rapper's Best Friend*, shows exactly why Mobb Deep and Jadakiss keep coming back to him for beats. Whether he's dropping chipmunk soul ("Stuck to U") or hardcore boom-bap ("Gangster Banger"), The Alchemist has the dexterity to make hip-hop that's bold and dramatic but never overpowering. These aren't just used and unused instrumentals—they're compositions that can be enjoyed by MCs, DJs, and every-day hip-hop listeners alike. *Max Herman*



Jak Danielz

JAK DANIELZ
BAR HOPPIN
 Bomb/US/CD

Sicilian-born, Queens-repping Jak Danielz is no new jack, yet he's likely a new name to most outside of the East Coast. This cat's discography is so sparse that you'd be hard pressed to find his releases (other than his new album) on store shelves. Released by San Francisco's renowned Bomb imprint, this 14-track effort is a solid introduction to Danielz, the hip-hop purist with a heavy New York accent and an urgent flow. When joined by Juice Crew member Craig G on the thunderous banger "Hip Hop Manual," Danielz proves that battle rap still has a place in hip-hop, even if only on an underground level. Not every punchline-centric track holds up quite as well here, but Danielz offers lyrical variety by rhyming about growing up an overweight outcast in Queens—not something your average tough-talking MC would readily cop to these days. *Max Herman*

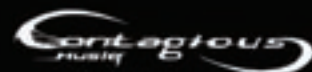
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THE TAPE VS. RQM

PUBLIC TRANSPORT

Kitty-Yo/GER/download

RQM has soul. The sweet smile of the longtime Brooklyn (now Berlin) MC reflects in his flows, but you can also hear heartache in his distinctive voice. *Public Transport* is RQM at his most introspective, written as a mixtape for suicidal lovers, traversing many topics that intersect with that mysterious emotion. Producer Robert Koch of Jahcoozi creates a perfectly complimentary soundtrack, guitars and beats glitched-out but always in consort with both RQM's flows and the vocals of the women who serve as his Greek chorus. Both the newly in love and the jilted lover will find something here, and the album wears its heart on its sleeve, emotionally ragged and touchingly sweet at the same time. *Matt Earp*

TOCA

TOCA

Two Tone Elephants/US/CD

Going in to record its self-titled debut, Toca didn't really have a plan of action—and it shows. This album, spearheaded by MC Daniel "Xololanxinxo" Rodriguez (from Of Mexican Descent), is all over the place, but in a good way. Somehow, this kinetic quintet manages to make a track with salsa, punk rock, and hip-hop elements ("Con Ruido") sound cohesive. Literally every song unveils a new direction for Toca—sometimes even within the songs themselves. On "Nice Try," what begins as a chaotic blast of psychedelia cools off into a laid-back roots reggae joint. On paper, this band's music makes little sense. And that's exactly why you have to experience the experimental energy of Toca for yourself. *Max Herman*

BJØRN TORSKE

FEIL KNAPP

Smalltown Supersound/NOR/CD

Bergen-based producer Bjørn Torske may not get out of the house but he certainly *makes* house music. He commands a sense of amplitude and economy that favors dub as much as astro-disco, similar to Idjut Boys, Stacey Pullen, and The Pop Group but minus the paranoia. Though starting out a bit moony, this album soon reveals an insistent coagulation of pliant tones. Some tracks, meanwhile, reach as much for Studio One as Sirius A; instead of the seraphic swatches of Torske's nouveau kosmische contemporaries, this one hints at much more corporal preoccupations. In many supple tracks the percussive anchors are live but unhurried, the total effect being poignant prog. *Tony Ware*

UNCUT

MODERN CURRENCIES

Paper Bag/CAN/CD

Originally a DJ duo composed of now-guitarist Ian Worang and Jake Fairley, Uncut was forced to change when Fairley moved to Europe to pursue a solo career. Worang built the band from the ground up, recruiting members from Toronto's indie rock scene. While their first album, *Those Who Hung Hang Here*, still carried a dance-rock sensibility, *Modern Currencies* is closer to past touring buddies like Bob Mould and Dinosaur Jr. The layered guitars make a pleasant din on tracks like "Out of Sight" and "Chain Fight," but they're overshadowed by formulaic compositions and some brutally embarrassing lyrics (see: "Kiss Me"). While it shows glimmers of potential, *Modern Currencies* rarely bests "mediocre." *Josiah Hughes*

UNKLE

WAR STORIES

Surrender All/UK/CD

"I'm gonna die in a place that don't know my name," Richard Ashcroft moaned nine years ago on Unkle's *Psyence Fiction*. But "Lonely Soul" would've worked even better on the desolate landscape of *War Stories*, the third concept album from Unkle mastermind James Lavelle. The theme here is terrestrial annihilation, as *War Stories*' psychedelic haze of live drums and hypnotic guitars (Queens of the Stone Age's Chris Goss is co-producer) grips you like a breath of desert air. The bombast can get stifling, but you're hopelessly drawn to the reverberating mirage of tracks like "Keys to the Kingdom," voiced by Gavin Clark. Lavelle's latest trip to Neverland is risky, but more accurately: hot. *Rachel Shimp*

VIDEOHIPPOS

UNBEAST THE LEASH

Monitor/US/CD

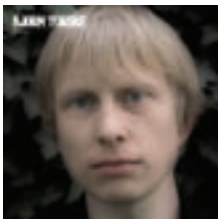
Another from Baltimore's Wham City explosion, Videohippos unsurprisingly will leave you grinning. Comprised of Kevin O'Meara and Jim Triplett, Videohippos have built a name from celebratory live shows that combine noisy pop with insane video collage. Their awesomely titled *Unbeast the Leash* full-length is pure fun, combining the melodic sensibility of homies Ecstatic Sunshine with the goofy, thrift-store electronics of Wham leader Dan Deacon. Tracks like "Bear Fight" and "Koolshades" let their guitars guide them, while songs like "Lazer Jet" and "Narwhals" leave room for surprisingly sincere vocals. Elsewhere, "Sick Dolphin" combines porpoise noises with Nintendo free jazz. *Unbeast the Leash* is like classic Steve Martin: pleasantly stupid, with just enough heart to keep you addicted. *Josiah Hughes*

ZEB

STOP THE EARTH, I WANT TO GET OFF

Wonderwheel/US/CD

That Italian Moreno Visini was born into a Gypsy household and dubbed Zeb by some British friends reveals something about his worldly influences. Similarly, *Stop the Earth* captures the West Indian, South Asian, and Arabic sounds he experienced in his early 20s in Ladbroke Grove, London. Now based in New York, the multi-instrumentalist traces trans-global latitudes from Middle Eastern dub to Afrobeat disco and funky Brazilian beats. Visini's stringed instrumentation adds refinement to the mostly downtempo dance grooves, but he goes beyond bland polyrhythmic jams on "Bauls of New York," which pays tribute to mystic minstrels from Bengal. If only the rest of the world were as unified and harmonious as Zeb's music! *Tomas Palermo*



Nicole Willis & The Soul Investigators

NICOLE WILLIS & THE SOUL INVESTIGATORS

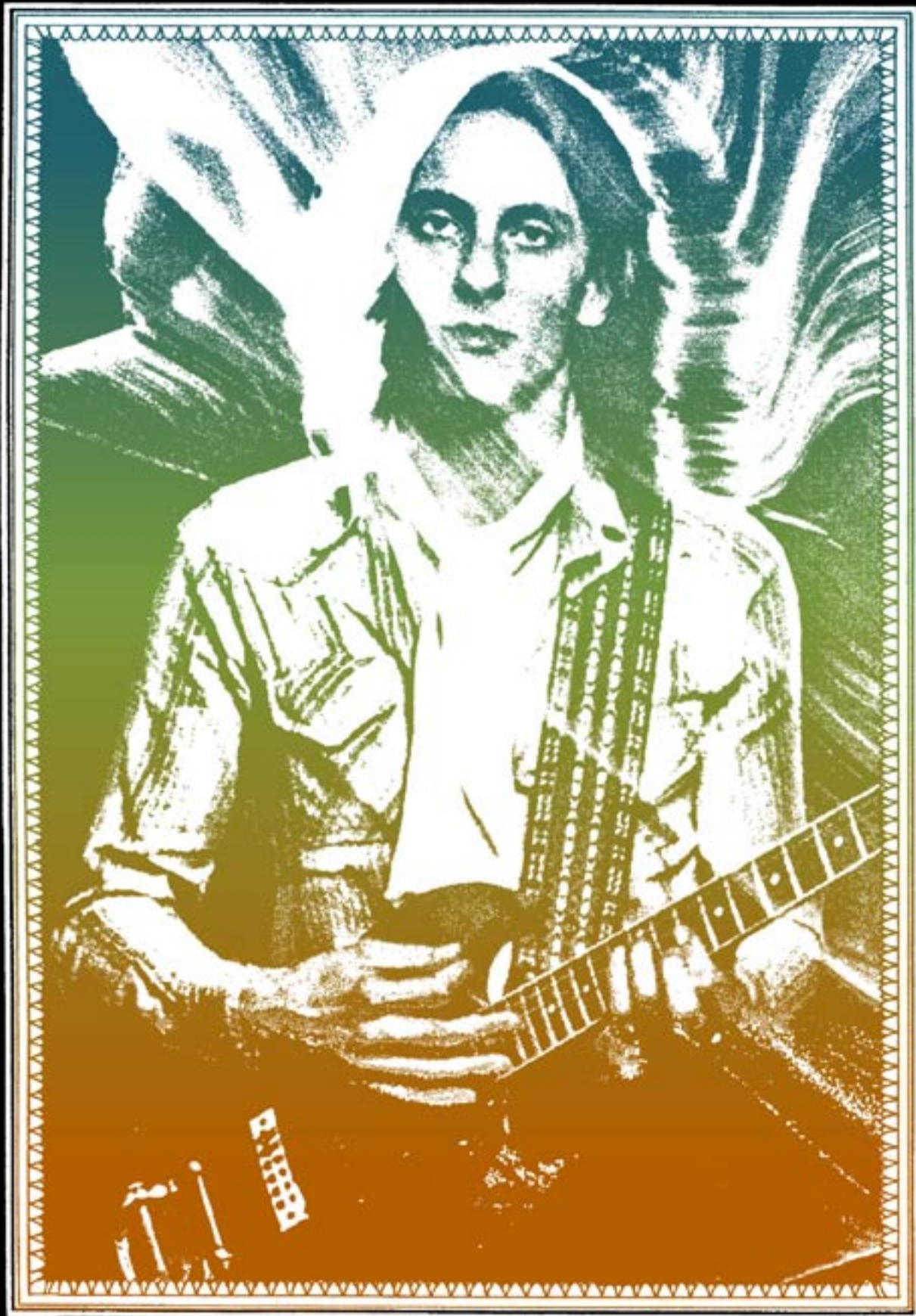
KEEP REACHIN' UP

Light in the Attic/US/CD

Were it not for Sharon Jones and those dastardly Dap Kings, we Yanks might really be shamed by New York expat Nicole Willis' magnificent Finnish friends, The Soul Investigators. From the strings-and-stomps Northern soul dancers "Feeling Free" and "If This Ain't Love," to her funky title track, the rare-groove "Blues Downtown," Willis covers the gamut of '60s- and '70s-era soul and funk without ever placing a foot fully into the "retro" camp. Like Amy Winehouse or Miles Tackett, Willis' soul music is thoroughly contemporary, despite its throwback instrumentation (Hammond organs, horns)—as you'd expect from someone whose previous credits include singing for Leftfield and Repercussions. *Keep Reachin' Up* finally gets its much-deserved U.S. release, and we're a better culture for it. *Justin Happer*

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NOTHING MUCH: A BEST OF MINUS
Minus/GER/CD

There's been a bit of a backlash against Minus Records' strain of austere techno among clubbers of my acquaintance and internet chatterers. As the foremost proponent of stripped-down 4/4 electronic music, Richie Hawtin's venerable company serves as an obvious touchstone/whipping boy for both supporters and haters. Arising as a Plus 8 subsidiary in 1998 (coinciding with the release of Plastikman's *Consumed* opus), Minus admittedly has peddled a decidedly furrowed-brow brand of often cerebral, un-anthem techno, as evidenced by the bulk of the *Minimize To Maximize* and *min2MAX* compilations.

That being said, the 11-track CD *Nothing Much* (which includes a bonus disc, *Something More*, mixed by Troy Pierce) finds the recent Berlin transplant label expanding its roster and introducing a bit of whimsy (see Ambivalent's "R U OK?" with its cheeky tale of a drug experience gone awry) while maintaining the kind of rigorous control that has rarely been equaled in electronic-music history.

Detractors may find the music here somewhat monochromatic, but listen closely and you'll detect subtle variations on a theme. Producers like Niederflur, Loco Dice, Mathew Jonson, and Hawtin/Plastikman himself all work within fairly narrow parameters, but their repertoire of sounds is distinctive and consistently stimulating. As with many excellent labels (Perlon, Raster-Noton, Orac, Wagon Repair, Cadenza), Minus projects what could be classified as a trademark sound, yet the selections here aren't so much reiterations as they are complementary pieces in a compelling mosaic. Jonson's "Decompression" is a foreboding, majestic stomp with nuanced acidic synth motifs; Loco Dice's "Seeing Through Shadows" hisses, plinks, and burbles with a sprightliness that's uncharacteristic of past Minus releases;

Magda's "48 Hour Crack In Your Bass" follows Ricardo Villalobos down the K hole with a grinding and not unpleasurable inevitability—it's a helluva mind-and-body trip.

Pierce's smoothly blended *Something More* bonus mix elaborates on Minus' remarkably cohesive aesthetic. The 25 tracks here will definitely keep high-IQ'ed clubbers moving while engaging more sedentary heads with textural and percussive embellishments that suggest several hours of productive R&D in the lab. However, if you're looking for pretty melodies and waiting divas to prompt you to get your motherfuckin' hands reflexively waving in the air, Minus won't really be able to accommodate you (although Gaiser vs. Heartthrob's damned saucy "Nasty Girl" could provoke something more lascivious than arm-waving). On the other hand, Minus' roster—including I.A. Bericochea, Gaiser, JPLS, False (a.k.a. Matthew Dear), Berg Nixon (a.k.a. Ryan Crosson), Marc Houle, and Run Stop Restore—will give you nourishing brain food while keeping your pulse elevated.

Think of Minus as the Criterion Collection of techno labels: Its products are built to edify and endure over the long haul. Minimal's peak hype moment may have passed, but Minus never really cared about the hoopla and hack bandwagon-riders, anyway. It just keeps on clickin' and twitchin' through advanced neural pathways in its own distinctive way, upgrading to its own exacting specs with ears cocked toward posterity rather than popularity. This franchise has legs. *Dave Segal*



Photo by Stefan de Bastier

RUMBLE IN THE JUNGLE

Soul Jazz/UK/CD
Soul Jazz's string of successes continues with this dynamite showcase of the UK jungle sound of 1994. Jungle's two breakout hits are included (Shy FX and UK Apache's "Original Nuttah" and M-Beat featuring General Levy's "Incredible"), as well as Jamaican crossover remixes like the Congo Natty smashup of "Under Mi Sensi" and Ninjaman's "Bad Boy Lick a New Shot." But the comp's real strength is its rare gems, which place jungle in the larger musical context that helped shape its sound. Particularly stellar are the three bubblin' Ragga Twins tracks and Shut Up and Dance's wicked "No Doubt." Soul Jazz isn't one to skimp on history, and Stuart Baker's liner notes clue both heads and newbies in to vital stories they might have missed, helping to navigate the lengthy history that already surrounded the genre by the mid-'90s. Even 'ardcore junglists will wheel this one back again. *Matt Earp*

Sa-Ra, and J Dilla. But that's the internet generation for you—influences spread like wildfire. Amid a lot of nice, choppy drum patterns and spaced-out synths, there are a few stand-out numbers, notably Amsterdam native Slumgullion's scorching-hot Nintendo-sampling "Castlevania." If anything, this compilation proves that the new wave of producers have learned from some of the best. Hopefully, they'll now take things even further. *Max Herman*

BULLWACKIE ALL STARS: FREE FOR ALL

Wackies-Basic Channel/GER/CD
One of the first dub albums ever issued in the US, the impossibly scarce *Free for All* has been a holy grail for followers of Wackies and devotees of Lee "Scratch" Perry alike. Issued in minute quantity on Aires with a stenciled cover as minimal as its foreboding rhythms, *Free for All* was part of the Tafari Records/Bullwackie axis, which saw a number of Scratch's stockpiled rhythms appearing in altered form on releases in New York. Thus, this album has wonderfully sparse dubs of Little Roy's "Tribal War" and "Blackbird," The Heptones' "Meaning of Life," and Jubie's rude "Action Wood," along with three dubbed-out cuts of an odd interpretation of Jackie Mittoo's "Autumn Sounds"—a truly awesome listening experience. *David Katz*

CHRIS DE LUCA VS. PHON.O: SHOTGUN WEDDING VOL. 7

Violent Turd/NZ/CD
"New Zealand"-based Violent Turd has yet to miss a beat in the *Shotgun Wedding* series—each one different than the last—and this seventh volume is no exception. The first mix is former Funkstorungian Chris de Luca crunking out and glitching up three dozen hip-hop jams—Missy, Luda, Kelis, Diddy, and more leftfield additions Traxamillion vs. Autechre, Edit, Krazy Baldhead—with lots of his own tweaks. Serious bounce. Phon.o goes for uptempo dance with chunky instrumentals from Stereotyp, Diplo's Bmore cuts, his own crunchy synth productions, and a healthy dose of Justin Timberlake. It's a great preview of the two artists' influences as the world awaits their original album. For a good time, call De Luca and Phon.o! *Matt Earp*

DIMITRI FROM PARIS PRESENTS COCKTAIL DISCO

BBE/UK/2CD
It looks like our friend finally got evicted from the Playboy Mansion. It was for the best—entertaining an octogenarian sultan and his harem with disco magic can be depressing. A decade ago, Dimitri made hipsters smile ironically with the splendors of French-themed lounge and psychedelia of the '60s. Here he indulges in '70s orchestral disco that befits naptime for cruise-line drunks. Standouts: the J. Elliott Group's bastardization of Martin Denny's exotica classic "Quiet Village" and Charlie's Roots' disco for the guy who's crying alone on a beanbag chair. Dimitri's mix grows middle-aged, but the music opens up ripe fantasies of the good times that you never had in the Me Decade. *Cameron Macdonald*

DISCO DEUTSCHLAND DISCO

Marina/GER/CD
Nu-disco jocks would have you believe that they've got disco's feel-good vibes and horn-blessed sounds down, but when you crank up *Disco Deutschland Disco*, an honorable excavation of German disco classics from 1975-1980, one might think that maybe folks like Prins Thomas are faking the funk a little bit. Here, diva-esque croons and gentle-but-consuming string sections (Su Kramer's "You've Got the Power Pt. 1") mix with clunky-yet-funky space-synth thumpers (Supermax's "Lovemachine") and dancefloor archetypes (*ooh-oohs* throughout) in a hedonistic, Wall-era haze. Perhaps it's more than a bit novel to hear these tracks now—often kitschy, often sung in German—but as a sampling of the dance-music nation's earliest offerings in the genre, it's nothing short of brilliant. *Derek Grey*

ESSENTIAL DUB

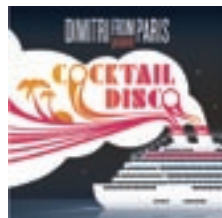
ROIR/US/CD
Reach Out International Records has been an alternative outpost for dub since the early '80s, when the Manhattan-based imprint began issuing cassette-only releases. This overview of the label's output showcases work from the musical margins, indicative of the ways dub is reinterpreted or used as one piece of a greater musical whole. It's the rare album that juxtaposes hardcore legends' Rasta leanings (Bad Brains' "Leaving Babylon"), Middle Eastern-tinged beats (Badawi's "Turbo Auto Drive), a poet's fiery instrumentals (Oku Onuora's "Dub Out"), and an innovator integrating with late-'70s New York punks (Terrorists' "Anittoo," featuring Lee "Scratch" Perry). While calling everything here "essential" is a reach, together these tracks comprise an alternative history of dub's evolutionary adaptations and mutations. *Patrick Sisson*

5 YEARS GET PHYSICAL

Get Physical/GER/CD
After five years of releasing venerable club anthems, Berlin-based Get Physical is finally giving itself a much-deserved pat on the back with this rarities and remixes comp. While the exclusive new material showcases GP's trademark blend of Chicago house and Berlin techno, it's the remix talent (Hot Chip, Padded Cell, Herbert) featured on Disc One that will really excite label devotees. The most intriguing action is straight out of leftfield: Señor Coconut reworks M.A.N.D.Y. vs. Booka Shade's "Body Language" into a vibraphone-laden, samba-house monster, while Larry Gold reveals the cinematic melancholy beneath the tech-funk of Booka Shade's "Night Falls" with a string-quartet cover. *5 Years* is another fine release from an incredibly consistent label. *Ross Holland*

BEAT DIMENSIONS VOL. 1 COMPILED BY CINNAMAN & JAY SCARLETT

Rush Hour/NL/CD
The next generation of hip-hop beat-makers has arrived. Impressively, this compilation—organized by European DJ/producers Cinnamon and Jay Scarlett—features contributors from all across the globe. Yet one rarely hears a distinct regional sound on these tracks, many of which sound descended from Madlib,



BOB MARLEY AND THE WAILERS: ROOTS, ROCK, REMIXED

Quango/US/CD
Roots, Rock, Remixed is hardly the first attempt at remixing of Bob Marley's classics. But even the most reputable of producers (Bill Laswell for one) have had trouble stepping up to bat, so this collection will likely be greeted with a bit of suspicion. With a decent-enough track selection, *Remixed* offers some standards without being too cheesy; Afrodisiac Sound System provides the handclap riddim remix to "Soul Shakedown Party," while DJ Spooky turns out a not-so-illbient version of "Rainbow Country." Jimpster ups the tempo with a deep house version of the Peter Tosh-penned "400 Years," and does the most to recontextualize the source, but Cordovan's mellow closer, "One Love," seems to lack Rasta power. *Daniel Sivek*

MOTOWN REMIXED VOL. 2

Motown/US/CD
Considering the size of Motown's archives, remixes are inevitable. Luckily, the original material's often so good that even mediocre producers could fare well—and this Latin-meets-Motown lineup is anything but mediocre. "Shotgun," from Jr. Walker & the All Stars, gets a Los Amigos Invisibles mix that strips down much of the track and turns up its drums. Marvin Gaye's "I Heard It Through the Grapevine" goes house in a Fun Machine mix, and two Jackson Five remixes ("I Want You Back" in a reggaeton take and the horn-driven Miami mix of "Dancing Machine") show why it's so tragic that Michael Jackson has gone off the rails. With results this good, *Vol. 3* is a virtual certainty. *Luciana Lopez*

RIDDIM RIDER VOL. 22: OLD PIRATE

Jet Star/UK/CD
For this installment of the one-rhythm series, producer Harvel "Gadaffi" Smith—whose Summer Bounce and Sweat riddims have appeared on similar compilations—reworks Bob Marley's "Redemption Song" as an instrumental backing track for Sizzla, Capleton, and various up-and-coming reggae artists. The result is a tepid, monotonous affair that doesn't come close to the spirit of the original. Gadaffi's beat is bland, and sounds like a commercial produced for the Jamaica Tourism Board. Especially disappointing is Gyptian's effort, which sounds about as soulful as Michael Bolton impersonating Tuff Gong. Only Gadaffi's next generation (I-Kay, Mystic Man, Smoke, J-Lee) even comes close to catching the fire of Jamaica's beloved ambassador. *James Mayo*

SHUT UP AND DANCE! UPDATED

Ostgut Ton/GER/CD
You might think a collaboration between the Berlin Staatsballet and the same city's Berghain techno club would result in something friction-filled or incongruous but *Shut Up and Dance!* isn't so crassly contrary. The invitation to Luciano, n.s.i., Sleeparchive, Âme, and the 7th Plain (a.k.a. Luke Slater) to score a ballet production to be premiered at the latter's near-legendary venue has produced a curiously agreeable suite of four tracks that are variously playful, emotive, austere, and tranquil. Working well in sequence, they highlight, more than anything, that techno is readily at ease in numerous contexts. *David Hemingway*

SKULL DISCO—SOUNDBOY PUNISHMENTS

Skull Disco/UK/CD
London imprint Skull Disco's resident producers Shackleton and Appleblim create brilliantly twisted dubstep that fancies the undead, full of decay, darkness, and lumbering steps. This vital compilation brings together the label's first five releases with outtakes and rarities, providing stark personality sketches of these celebrated new artists. Adorned with fidgeting tambourine shakes and hiccupping percussion, Shackleton's sparse and swirling Middle Eastern-tinged melodies exude creeping doom with minimal effort, like a madman's disquieting gaze. It's mystical and skeletal—especially "Blood on My Hands," which contains hypnotic lyrics about the Twin Towers—with dissociative beats bleached and picked clean. Appleblim takes a more enveloping route, heightening his paranoid soundscapes by slicing off heavy, rumbling slabs of low-end with a dull blade. *Patrick Sisson*

TIEFSCHWARZ PRESENT BLACK MUSIK

Souvenir/GER/CD
Black Musik celebrates the 10-year mark for German über-DJ/producers Ali and Basti Schwarz, and the first anniversary of their Souvenir label. Paying homage to the corresponding decade-long span of club music, the mix unearths goodies like Tuff Little Unit's synthed-out "Join Your Future" and Ewan Pearson's snare-tight remix of "Stars EP" by the Björk-like Courtney Tidwell. Too-short segues aside,

Black Musik showcases some 12" gems: snarling bass flows from Broke's "Over That" into Donnacha Costello's cheerfully foul-mouthed "6.6." A bonus remix CD assembles goodies like the Turntablerocker's remix of Tiefschwarz's "No More Trouble." May the Schwarz be with you. *Janet Zou*

VIRUS SYNDICATE PRESENT CONTAGIOUS VOL. 1

Contagious/UK/CD
London is the center of the grime universe, but Virus Syndicate wants to put Manchester on the map. The crew (producer MRK1 and MCs Nika D, JSD, and Goldfinger) lays down bass-heavy beats and rhymes that don't sacrifice crispness in their quickness. There's real cleverness here, as on "Cant Do the Rhyme," where they call out MCs who "don't make sense most of the time." And unlike Lady Sovereign, the crew doesn't try to make its songs pop-friendly MTV fodder. It's not all smooth, though: The constant references to their MySpace page sound desperate, and some tracks never quite gel (Poet Shadeo's "No Style"). But this trip could be the ticket to expand your grime horizons. *Luciana Lopez*



NOUVELLE VAGUE PRESENTS NEW WAVE

District 6/UK/CD
New wave's shiny newness has worn off. But Nouvelle Vague—French producers Marc Collin and Olivier Libaux—has continued to find something new in it (often by adding a bossa nova twist) since their 2004 debut album. Here, it's not NV covering '80s classics; it's the classic bands themselves. Devo does The Rolling Stones' "Satisfaction," Joy Division covers The Velvet Underground's "Sister Ray," and Polyphonic Size takes on the Stones' "Mother's Little Helper." When it works, the comp shows how good songs hold up and good artists transform; here Gary Numan's electro-fied "On Broadway" brings delicious sleaze to the song. There are a few misfires—Antena's echo-y, mechanized "Boy from Ipanema" missed the original's point—but they're few enough over this two-disc set that they don't mar the experience. *Luciana Lopez*



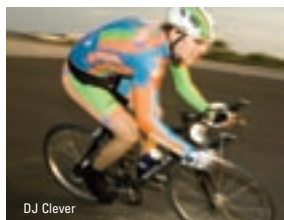
Basic Needs
By Kid Kameleon
LOW-END NECESSITIES, FROM RAGGA TO DUBSTEP AND BEYOND



Aaron Spectre (by Connie McGrath)



Secret Agent Gel (by Patrick Rood)



DJ Clever

It was my privilege to spend a couple days in late May with three bass scientists—**Pole**, **Kode 9**, and **Badawi**—in San Francisco and at Montreal's MUTEK festival. All have different sounds, backgrounds, agendas, labels, countries of origin—and, obviously, approaches to making music—but it's a brilliant thing when they're all in the same place because of their openness to new ideas and their heavy foundation in the low-end world. Kode 9 and **Spaceape** blew me away in Montreal, pushing new full-tempo constructions that battle the string of plodding half-tempo head-nodders threatening to remove the "step" from dubstep. Kode9 has got remixes out now of **Junior Boys** and the hyperdub label's own **Massive Music**, as well as a wicked twist-up with raw-as-hell **Warrior Queen** entitled "Fuck You," all stellar and boundary-pushing. Track of the night? "Poison Dart," also featuring Warrior Queen, by **The Bug**, coming on Ninja Tune. Insane. Check kode9.blogspot.com for a special Sonar Festival mix, featuring these tunes and more.

A few Stateside dubstep producers are pushing things forward as well. Texas' **Parson** has a couple of long-awaited EPs out. The first is on his label, The Independents, with tracks from himself featuring **Smoke**, **Loetech**, **Bowser**, and **DZ**. The second is on Dubline, with the William S. Burroughs-sampling "The Mark Inside," a tear-jerker entitled "Empty Houses," and the low-and-slinky "Ghost Liner" remix by **Distance**. San Francisco's **Roommate** has been causing a stir as well with "Last Breath" b/w "Take That" on Breakbeat Science, their first foray into dubstep singles territory. Breakbeat Science affiliate **Clever**'s Offshore label has teamed up with Hot Flush's **Paul Rose** to create Hotshore, releasing **Scuba**'s "Braille Diving" and the always superb drum & bass beat-tweaker **Martman**'s "Step Up (Berlin)." Hot Flush in turn has stolen one of Offshore's artists, **Intex Systems**, for the second part of their 15th release, getting his dark and chunky "Destroy" and newcomer **Vaccine**'s "Anaesthetic" for the label. Both tracks are full of Hot Flush's standard atmospheric, epic qualities.

Warlock's Rag and Bone label has got a couple of EPs up, too. First is nice work from Basic Needs regular **Starkey** ("Prism" b/w "Bounce"), with his thumping, clattery Philly take on street bass. The second is **Aaron Spectre**'s "Music Is a Weapon" b/w "Say More Fire." It's his crazy-tight version of breaks—or dubstep mixed with driving funk and verging on straight-ahead breaks. His tracks explode outwards with Amens and ripping basslines before settling again; they're consistently mind-blowing and sure to have genre-crossing appeal.

Disrupt's Jahtari label has all sorts of goodies out (or coming out soon): the **Maffi** boys from Copenhagen with their die-hard digital, pure bouncement reggae; sweet **Clouds** from Helsinki pushing a very dubby form of dubstep with "Elders," Jahtari standard-bearer vocalist **Mikey Murkah** with tracks from **Rootah** and remixes from Disrupt himself; and the wonderfully full sound of **John Frum** (the alias of Frenchman Julien Neto), coming like a sweet version of Twilight Circus. All tunes for download at www.jahtari.org

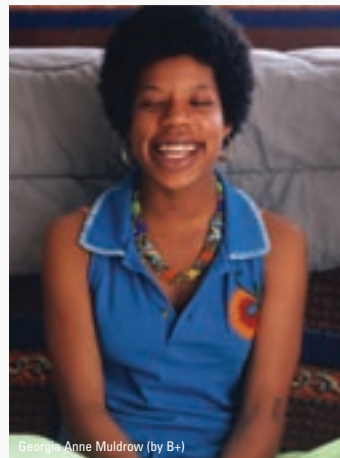
Two final quick shouts: **Evol G** and **Hecca** are repping Boise, Idaho(!) and passed me their 1984 EP of synthstep which is truly wicked (www.virb.com/evol_g_and_hecca). Also check out **Secret Agent Gel**'s prankster side-project **Music of Thieves**—hella fun for mash-up remixes at www.myspace.com/thievesbrooklyn.



Downbeat Diaspora
By Rico Washington
GETTING YOU UP ON THE SHARPEST SOUL, FUNK, AND R&B



Sa-Ra



Georgia Anne Muldrow (by B+)

It's too damn funky in here! Somebody open a window! What up, y'all! Time for me to drop yet another two cents in the bucket o' soul, funk, and errything in between. There's a bunch a stuff I want to bring you guys up to date on, so listen closely and pay attention!

In case you didn't know, the first lady of lecherous funk, **Betty Davis**, recently had the honor of having her first two albums reissued in righteous fashion by Light in the Attic Records. 1973's *Betty Davis* and 1974's *They Say I'm Different* have both been remastered with deluxe artwork and bonus tracks! The former Mrs. Miles Davis is actually gettin' paid off these jawns, so go out and support, dammit! Don't be scurr'd! It ain't nuthin' but some funk!

If the name **Leroy Burgess** doesn't ring a bell, then his music damn well should! If you've gotten your boogie on to songs like **Black Ivory**'s "Mainline," **Fonda Rae**'s "Over Like A Fat Rat," or **Universal Robot Band**'s "Barely Breaking Even," then you can bear witness to his four-to-the-floor wizardry. Soul Brother Records is readying the release of *Throwback/Harlem '79-'83*, a collection of unreleased gems from Burgess' vaults that have been spit-shined and reworked to perfection.

From the makers of the twisted genius of **Cee-Lo Green** and **Dangermouse**'s **Gnarls Barkley** comes alterna-soul singer **Kevin Michael**. Y'all shoulda heard of this kat already. Hailing from the mighty Illadelph wit' a wicked-ass Prince-meets-Stokley Williams style, his latest single, "We All Want the Same Thing" (Downtown), has been bubbling just under the surface for a minute and is just 'bout ready to snap, crackle 'n' pop!

Okay, so now that **Sa-Ra**'s *Cosmic Dust/Cosmic Lust* EPs came and went in the blink of an eye, I sure as hell hope you got your copies of

their latest **Jazzy Sport** EPs, *Sonic Seduction 1 & 2* No?! Whatchutalkin' 'bout, Willis?! You better cop that!

Question: With all the major-label mergers and closings, don't it warm your heart to see old-school labels reemerging? In tandem with Concord Records, the Memphis musical powerhouse Stax Records is once again up and running! After shutting its doors in 1976 following a failed run at self-ownership, the incomparable Soulsville, USA is back with a solid roster, including soul legend and former Stax staff writer **Isaac Hayes** and neo-soul mama **Angie Stone**! Aw, shucky duck!

Who in the hell is **Pattie Blingh**? Sounds like a hip-hop alias for somebody's grandmama. But listening to the 10 badass cuts on *Sagala* (Ramp Recordings), ain't no mistakin' **Georgia Anne Muldrow**'s style, no matter what pseudonym she goes by!

Yo, word on the street is that Dr. Cornell West's latest venture is an album of hip-hop and R&B. Say word!? Supposedly Hidden Beach is backing his upcoming full-length, *Never Forget: A Journey of Revelations*, which features contributions from **Prince**, the late **Gerald Levert**, **M-1** of **Dead Prez**, **KRS-One**, **Andre 3000**, former **Tower of Power** lead singer **Lenny "Cause I Love You" Williams**, and a cast of thousands.

With that being more than a mouthful to keep y'all for a month or so, lemme get back to diggin' in these crates. I definitely plan to holla back after all the cookouts and hot fun in the summertime. 'Til then, stay funky.

ENGINEERED TO DESTROY



Patrick The Captain Rood, Cut NYC www.cutnyc.com

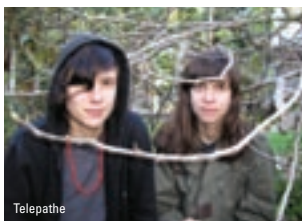




After Silence
By Martin De Leon
THE OUTER ORBITS OF ELECTRONIC MUSIC



Of Montreal



Telepathe



Boom Bip

Sunshine beating down on my melting windows means it's time for sweat and synthesizers. This month, I want to talk about summer and the labels that make it worth destroying your air conditioner.

Black Dice, who has been at it for 10 years now, has a great 12" out on excellent Paw Tracks label that is the perfect beginning to a season of craziness. "Roll Up" uses Mexican circus beats and slinky minimal techno, and puts them through a mescaline blender. "Drool" is a bit darker, and uses what sounds like a turntable scratch and fairy flutes to brilliant effect. This is some of their best stuff in years.

Not to depress you before you jam out with that waterproof laptop at the pool, but don't plan on listening to internet radio. The Copyright Royalty Board has passed a horrible decision to charge internet radio stations, including the tiny ones, an expensive per-song fee for streaming music. Yet another example of how the music industry is deaf: They're destroying the bedroom John Peels of the world. Awesome, guys.

But, cheer up. New York avant-rockers **Battles**' new 12" single, "Atlas" (Warp), won't abandon you. Their geeky time signatures and caps-lock groove is awesome but I would steal this single for the remix alone. Their geometric drums and robot voice are substituted for a filthy, minimal thump from **DJ Koze** that pounds over seven awesome minutes. You can leave the flip-flops at the door.

Kicking out the jams, London's Lex Records just put out **Boom Bip**'s great *Sacchralege* EP. With post-disco on "Snook Adis," electro bangers ("Rat Tail"), and even old-school acid house ("One of Eleven"), Boom Bip's polished beats make me want to dust off my 303. If, you know, I had one.

You probably have one of these, though: a blog. The only real reason to log on to your computer should be British MP3 outlet **20 Jazz Funk Greats** (www.20jazzfunkgreats.blogspot.com). Named after the Throbbing Gristle album of the same name, this weblog features bizarre experimental electronics from tons of acts. I don't know about this "internet" thing, though. Mom says it's a fad.

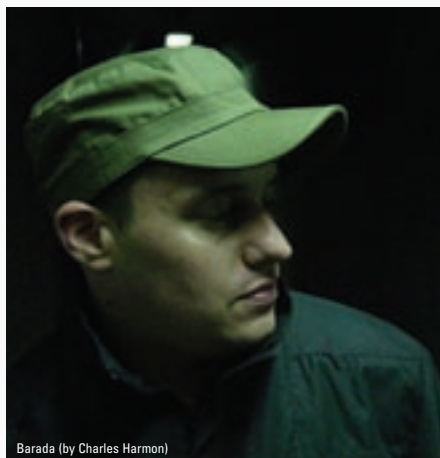
Brooklyn label Metal Postcard, on the other hand, is real. One recent gem is Melbourne post-punk duo **The Emergency**, whose *Spending Time 7"* channels Ed Banger ethos with ESG hip-shaking. The other is part of their *Heavy 7"* series, where rapper **Kid Static** and Prefuse 73-lite producer **Yea Big** unleash raw nerd rap on four glitchy tracks.

Little excites me more than weird singers from L.A. **Julia Shammass Holter** is on one of the best labels out there, Ariel Pink's Human Ear Music, and her tweedle-dee experimental folk is proof. *Eating the Stars*, Holter's debut EP, showcases her innocent voice and knack for using collage samples as if she were in Stereolab.

In other boombox news, **Of Montreal** released another great EP called *Icons, Abstract Thee* (Polyvinyl), which continues their reign of weirdo rock. And **Telepathe**, a magical duo I first talked about here months ago, just put out their amazing debut EP, *Sinister Militia* (The Social Registry), which proves that psychedelic R&B is this year's thing—a remix from **Soft Pink Truth** agrees. Youth never sounded so damn good.



Bubble Metropolis
By M.L. Tronik
TECHNO: MINIMAL, BANGING, AND BEYOND



Barada (by Charles Harmon)



Carl Craig (by Rob Walters)

Raving I'm raving... **Chic Miniature**'s latest release, *Poco-A-GoGo* (Musique Risquee), was recently dropped into my hands just days after I was lucky enough to catch the Latin-American duo in a blazing DJ set at the MUTEK Festival in Montreal. I'm not sure what it is about me and b-sides, but I found the backing track, "Kimono," most appealing. It implies topless DJing in Argentina more so than anything Asian in nature, though.

The free-techno-jazz movement has begun. Always driving the music forward, **Carl Craig** opens up the bomb bays and unloads another one on us, *Paris Live* (Planet E). And when you consider this recording, captured from a live set in Paris, also features **UR's Mike Banks** on synths, with Carl programming beats, it's even more brain-staining. "Twilight" features a fantastic keyboard solo, and the immortal "At Les" comes with a sparkling sax solo. Most people won't understand this, but 15 years from now it may be looked back upon as seminal.

This month there are two impressive releases from microhouse stalwart Morris Audio. First, **Ralph Silwinski** pushes some major weight with his *Freaks & Muscles* EP. (Who needs a dazzling pseudonym when you have the funk like this kid does?) The b-side is weird, with more of a mellow groove and a baby talking about some strange shit. The other slab sees the return (once again?) of **Barada**, whom you may remember from his classic weirdo tech-house releases on Canada's Definitive label. *Renew Your Circuits* is apparently his first new single in four years. And, since saying "it's been well worth the wait" is one of the most hackneyed phrases in all of music journalism, I won't use it.

Speaking of overuse, you would think at this stage of the game that electro-acid-techno is pretty stale. I mean who *still* plays this stuff, right? Well, take a listen to **Microthol's Microcosmos Remixed** (Trust). **Marco Passarani's** "Acid

Bosons" remix and **Alexander Robotnick's** "Midnight Moroder" reboot of the original fill the genre with new blood.

Also new on Trust is **Urban Tribe's Bio Electronics** EP. The Detroit native returns on this four-tracker with more of that abstract 313 funk. "Protein Coat" ponders the possibility of life forms on faraway planets, while "Diffraction Pattern" is straight out of the Black Dog/Plaid playbook. The cuts on the b-side, "Eukaryotic" and "Quantum Encryption," are much slower in tempo but remain in the same vein.

For the straight-ahead techno heads, it's yet another stomper from **Chris Liebling**. Part two of his *A,B,C,D* EP (CLR) is finally out and, while I found "C" fairly run-of-the-mill, the final installment ("D") is probably the best of the entire series and a nice way to round it out. The track builds and builds with a rock-solid kick and snare pushing throughout. Liebling is one of the better maximal producers out there at moment so keep your ears peeled for this banger.

If you're looking for more bang for your record-buying buck, you should take a listen to **Scan 7's You Have the Right 2007** remixes on Cratesavers. The double-pack features remixes from **Aaron Carl**, **Jay Denham**, and Scan 7 himself. In terms of genres, the single spans the gamut from soulful house to electro to warehouse-banging techno.

Also on the remix tip is **Tim Xavier's** underground hit "Deception de Real" (Clink). This deep minimal techno effort is bolstered by new versions offered up by **Tony Rohr**, **Dave Turov**, and **Par Grindvik**. Fans of Minus will eat this one up.



Techno Guest Reviews:
Oliver Huntemann

Despite rejecting his six-year stint in the German Navy—the result of his parents' prodding when he told them he wanted to pursue music as a profession—Bremen-based Oliver Huntemann makes electro-techno with a stark, almost militaristic quality to it. And lately he's lent that dark-hued flair to remixes for Chemical Brothers and Depeche Mode. But for a real taste of Huntemann's style, check out his DJ sets or mixes like *Play! 01*, released earlier this year on his own Confused Recordings, featuring underground hits from Gui Boratto, The Knife, studio partner Stephan Bodzin, and Huntemann himself (under multiple guises). Here's what he's rocking these days. *Aaron Ashley*
www.huntemann.co.uk

BEROSHIMA "HORIZON"
Cocoon/GER/12

Berlin-based Frank Müller normally releases on his own imprint, Müller Records, but for his latest strike, he starts a liaison with Sven Väth's Cocoon label. If this track is not one of the most played tunes in the upcoming open-air season, I will eat my hat. (I don't own one yet, but I swear to buy one in that case.) "Horizon" is simply a bass killer with a sweet, melodic topping. Primetime galore! *Oliver Huntemann*

SIOBHAN DONAGHY "DON'T GIVE IT UP (CARL CRAIG REMIXES)"
Labels/FRA/12

Gert Fröbe may have played Goldfinger in 1964 but nowadays it's Carl Craig who has the Midas touch. His interpretation of "Don't Give Up" is another "9:09" remix epic. Hypnotizing sequences, deep beats, and the perfect integration of vocals. If you don't like vocals, no problem; there is a dub version on the flip side. Caution: This is not minimal—this is huge! *Oliver Huntemann*

JEFF SAMUEL "FIRE (CLAUDE VONSTROKE'S LIKE A FLYAA REMIX)"
Pokerflat/GER/12

Steve Bug's Pokerflat was the first successful minimal house label, and the sound came alive for millions of DJs and producers. Often copied but never bested. Jeff Samuel's "Fire" is more tech than house, especially the Claude VonStroke remix—a pearl of the new, modern, sexy underground. Dark but not depressing, and simple but not stupid. *Oliver Huntemann*

SOYLENT GREEN "LA FORCA DEL DESTINO (RADIO SLAVE REMIX)"
Playhouse/GER/12

Roman Flügel is one part of the "Rocker" duo Alter Ego, and he has another alter ego called Soylent Green. Getting big-league remixer Radio Slave to take on this über-producer was a stroke of genius. A driving track dominated by a monotone bassline and extraordinary effects. Save it to play after 5 a.m. *Oliver Huntemann*

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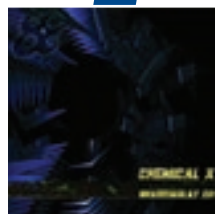
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By **Nick Chacona**
HOUSEKEEPING, FROM TECH AND MINIMAL
TO DEEP AND TRADITIONAL



Chuck Love (by Geoffrey George)



Hanna Hais (by Prince Pini)



D Ramirez & Mark Knight

Though many would assume it belongs in the prog/trance/breaks zone, Fade Records honcho **Chris Fortier's** new artist album, *As Long As the Moment Exists* (EQ Recordings), surprisingly lies in house's outer reaches, revealing Fortier's heretofore unseen artistic depth. Though the aforementioned styles are represented, *As Long* traverses the spectrum of tech-focused palettes to culminate in a truly electro-psychedelic 4/4-driven experience. Highlights include the title track's intensely melancholic atmospherics and the ultra-dubby "Deep Throbmostess."

Also on the full-length frontier, Manchester's percussion man **Dubble D** presents his sophomore full-length entitled *Playin' Out!!* (2020 Vision). Though a good percentage of these tracks are more on the abstract jazzy breaks tip, the rest demonstrate D's knack for sculpting warm and engaging grooves around a four-to-the-floor backbone. On "Coleman," synths float and keys climb hypnotically, while "Transistor Jazz" is a mid-tempo Latin affair built around a filtered synth bass.

2020 sub-label Infant has made quite a discovery in the New York-by-way-of-Israel producer **Elon**. *Tamingo* is a complex and slithering maze of minimal tech-house that creatively breathes new life into the formulaic rhythm patterns heard in many tracks these days. Also look out for new releases by Elon this summer on Naturalism, Klink, and Clinkhaus.

Timo Maas's Four:Twenty Records has been a wellspring of success lately, with **Loco Dice** and **Martin Buttrich** moving swiftly toward techno stardom. To showcase some of this talent, Four:Twenty will be releasing the second installment of their *Music* compilation, mixed once again by James Mowbray. *Music:02* features tracks by **Daniel Stefanik**, **B-Pole**, **TG**, **Ost & Kjex**, and **Deepak Sharma & Dieter Krause** (who have just penned a deal with Heineken to produce tracks for a their next global

TV campaign), among others.

It seems that even the big-room tribal sound has been injected with some tech energy these days, and a stunning example is the *Columbian Soul* EP (Toolroom Trax) by heavy-hitters **D Ramirez** and **Mark Knight**. Each of these three tunes is filled with throbbing kicks, pulsating bass punches, synth swirls, and digitized Latin percussion, but what's most interesting are the "Rej"-esque bleeps, utilized in quite different ways but each super-effective. Minimal isn't fully the new tribal yet!

Way over in leftfield, everyone's favorite **Freaks** (**Justin Harris** and **Luke Solomon**) have decided to assemble as a five-piece and re-release their heralded promo-only "Tweakers" as a full release, with bonus tune "Repeater" on the flip. Also included is the Tweakers dub, which wasn't on the original release—another excellent reason to pick this one up.

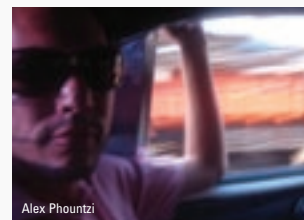
DJs wanting something different for those summertime cocktail hours and uptempo lounges, should check the latest collaboration between France's **Hanna Hais** and **Matthias Heilbronn**, "Bel Amant" (Atal Music). Built around an Afro-tinged groove that's found in many deeper tracks these days, "Bel Amant" showcases Hais' sultry vocals, sung in her native tongue, giving this tune a moody swagger and sexy attitude—not unlike Serge Gainsbourg. Matty provides an extended mix and an instrumental, while **Tom & Joy** offer a more broken groove that adds a bit of fusion-jazz funk to mix.



Broken Business
By **Peter Nicholson**
FUTURE JAZZ AND BUSTED BEATS



Slope



Alex Phountzi



LTC

We're going to run this one just like a nice set down at your favorite dive—so picture the single red bulb hanging from the ceiling, those same fools propping up the bar like always, and the lonely promise of an empty dancefloor.

A good way to get in the mood is always a touch of jazz, and Finland's Ricky Tick Records is one of the more dependable labels for stuff of the swinging variety. Their latest release finds Italian piano trio **LTC** serving up the rolling but sharp "Easy Does It," backed with a supple bossa number, "Menino das Laranjas." A stripped-down vibe that still oozes sophistication.

Dance jazz always hits the spot, but sometimes you need something with a splash more bass to make sure that that dancefloor doesn't stay empty. The *CoOp III* EP (CoOp) has an excellent bridge track in the shape of **Karizma's** "I C U"—all 12 minutes of it. Nobody's in a rush here, starting with some rim shots and a hollow bass-drum thump, then adding a scratchy horn sample and keeping the tension building.

Now that things are starting to hot up a bit, we've got a bit of a problem—which version of **Yellowtail** feat. **Theasha Faison's** "Stressin" should we drop? Luckily, we picked up a few copies and can run from the wobbly, stuttered vocal and wet bass of **Titanton's** "Refreak" to the percussive freak-out of **Silverback's** re-rub, with its tiny yelp and big, menacing vibe. Massive!

Well, would you look at that? All of a sudden that dancefloor ain't so empty, but we gotta keep things moving so out comes a big one from Visions Inc.—**Freedom Soundz** feat. **Colonel Red's** "Take My Love." With Alex Attias at the controls, it's a hot, syncopated stepper. And if you dig the soulful male vocals

over ripped-up broken beats, pair it with **Seiji** and **Ernesto's** "Prepared to Go." That's from the *Swell Session: Swell Communications Sampler* EP on Freerange, a massive collaboration-fest between Stockholm's **Andreas Saag** and the likes of **Lyric L**, **Landslide**, and **Mr. Scruff**.

Got a room eating out of your hand and want to keep it that way? Serve 'em up a dose of **Domu**. You gotta be picky sometimes (dude is very busy with remixes, and quality control can slip) but you're safe with his work for **Rednose Distrikt**—"Best DJ" is all tangled disco loops, chopped siren samples, and a hollow bottom end just right for loping around like a lunatic.

Drinks are getting spilled and last call is getting close, so we'll slip in some deep sounds courtesy of Sonar Kollektiv. "Gemini," from **Slope**, is one of those beautiful songs that lives beyond genres—with a lightly broken 4/4 beat, a little Afrobeat vibe, some watery synths burbling along contentedly, and a dash of tense strings to top things off, "Gemini" goes down well even when you're seeing double.

But we can't just fade things out—gotta shut down with a bang. For the final cut, I'm calling on **Alex Phountzi** of Neon Phusion fame for his "It Ain't Rockit Science" (Archive). With a bent, '80s-style bass lick, and tech-funk splashed all over some seriously chopped drums n' synths, it'll be ringing in their ears as they stagger home.

La Voz Sabia De Los Cosmos
Music by Carlos Millo & Carlos Hernandez, Inspired by Poetry and Script Books written by Carlos Millo

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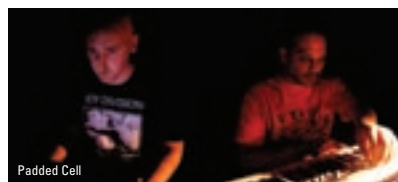
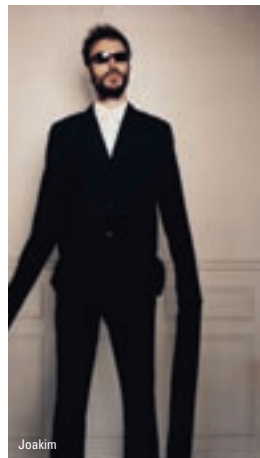
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Apocalypse Wow By Roy Dank

TRAVERSING TIME AND SPACE IN SEARCH OF
ODDBALL DANCE GOODIES



Quality over quantity is the name of the game for mean **Brennan Green's** already renowned Chinatown label. Kicking off last year with the label head's own late-night burner, "Little Ease," Chinatown returns to the fray with more slo-mo action chock full o' nuttiness. Just before summer hit, promo copies with Green's version of **Studio's** "West Side" did the rounds, but the full release comes backed with "Was Bite," a mysterious collaboration featuring both Green and Studio, and rumors abound of one **Daniel Wang** joining in the melee. Following the second release comes "Oslo Ordeal," which boasts Green yet again, this time collaborating with disko buddies **Lindstrom and Prins Thomas**. Keep that tongue wagging, kids!

In other breaking news, **Pilooski's** massive edit of Frankie Valli & The Four Seasons' "Beggin'" was not only spotted by the actual rights owners, it's been picked up by Warner imprint 679 for an official release in the U.K. This is quite the coup for the edits folks out there, to say the very least. Pilooski also just dropped a killer edit of **Yellow Power's** "Hai Samurai" on the first edition of Tigersushi's new *Dirty Space Disco 12*" series. This double a-sider also features the disco-y blues of JJ Cale's "Ride Me High," edited by none other than fellow Parisian **Joakim**.

France is so hot right now, and it's not just the Ed Banger boys (and girl) doin' the do. Versatile's gone and signed up nu-Kraut duo **Zombie Zombie**, whose live shows are apparently gettin' all those French hipster girls' panties in a bunch. And let's not forget the first volume of **I:Cube's** *Les Archives Cubistes* series, which culls compelling cuts from the 'Cube that previously never saw release. On the other side of town comes the **Kill the DJ** crew, whose parties are reportedly the stuff of legend. Their label comes correct, too. Fany and Co. have roped in **Tigertiming** from the Soul Jazz camp and **Tim Paris** for some first-rate remixes of **Jason Edwards'** "Codeine."

Speaking of remixes, how's this for complicated? The totally tops **Toby Tobias** on Tiny Sticks getting re-worked by **Chicken Lips'** experimental house project **Zeefungk**, only then to be edited by none other than **Pete Herbert**. Now read that again, and recite it back. In all seriousness, though, Tobias' "Steel Bells" is one helluva acid cut.

DC Recordings' dynamic duo **Padded Cell** continues their remix assault with their take on **Future Loop Foundation's** "The Sea and the Sky," and what a mix it is! In similarly not-exactly-house, not-quite-disco, but shit-hot-dancefloor-fodder news comes fellow *XLR8R* scribe **Nick Chacona** with "Tonka," which is due for release on 2020 Vision's new *World Series*, um, series of split singles.

Munich's Bingo brothas from different muthas (a.k.a. **Kaos** and **Muallem**) have been hard at work prepping their forthcoming *Elaste* compilation of cosmic gems. In the interim, we're lucky to get a little backdoor 12" teaser featuring edits courtesy of these two fine gentlemen along with their Portuguese pal **Tiago**. "Ganges" is my pick of the lot here. Rounding things out is my man **Peter Black's** peculiar Pylon label, with killer packaging to match its musical output. The recently issued "1979" is a must-buy with its industrial-esque vibes.



Read the Label By Jesse "Drosco" Serwer

HIP-HOP MIXTAPES, WHITE LABELS, AND SHIT



Brooklyn indie rockers **Ratatat** did a bang-up job of applying their electro-fuzz instrumentals to acapellas from Ghostface, Kanye West, and others on their *Remixes, Vol. 1* a few years back. A second installment, *Ratatat Presents Remixes Vol. II*, recently arrived and it is equally good. Moving Southward, *Vol. II* freaks Young Buck's "Shorty Wanna Ride," Z-Ro's "The Mule," and a handful of tracks featuring cover star **Bun B** (whose Rap-A-Lot chain is altered to read "Rat-A-Tat"—touché), with freestyles from **Beans** and **Despot** thrown in for good measure. Far from a forced-sounding mash-up record, *Remixes Vol. II* instead elucidates the role hip-hop plays in Ratatat's sound.

Face it: Papoose and Saigon albums aren't dropping anytime soon. Nope, the rising star most likely to bring New York York swagger back is **Lil Mama**. Sure, "Lip Gloss" was a "kid song" but this 17-year-old Brooklynite is fierce on the mic. "Make It Hot" (Jive), the second single from her brilliantly titled *Voice of the Young People* LP, showcases her singing skills as well. Expect Missy-like growth as her career progresses.

Also coming from Brooklyn are **Skyzoo** and **Torae**, who hook up on the **DJ Premier**-produced "Get It Done" b/w "Click" (Fat Beats/Works of Mart). While there's nothing groundbreaking going on here, both tracks deserve the underground love they're getting. Skyzoo and Torae both have new street albums worth checking out as well: *Corner Store Classic* and *Daily Conversation*, respectively.

Fans of that raw New York stuff would do well to check out **Styles P's** latest release, *The Ghost Sessions* (Streetcore Recordings). This legal mixtape of sorts feels like more of a statement than Paniro's recent Interscope release, *Time Is Money*, so go figure. Armed with beats from **Large Professor**, **Jimi Kendrix**, and MOP's **Lil' Fame**, and guest verses from **Kool G. Rap**, **Cormega**, and **Joell Ortiz**, Styles definitely

steps his game up here, so don't sleep on tracks like "Hold On" and "Poor Folk."

Every Latin MC who spits hard gets compared to Big Pun but **Garcia** sounds so much like "El Rapero Mayor," it's scary. Far from a biter, "Clear My Mind," off the Miami MC's new *Life Unscripted* LP (Latchkey Recordings/Crazy Hood), finds the Cuban MC ruminating on past mistakes while an operatic chorus and sax-driven beat from the long-M.I.A. **DJ Honda** flow smoothly together.

Blues and hip-hop have a lot in common but there aren't too many acts I'd describe as "blues rap." But that describes **Nine:Fifteen** to a t, with DC producer **Blake-9** dropping some seriously twangy samples into his beats and MC **Comel_15** (also of L.A.'s **Time Machine**) spitting on tracks with names like "The One I Always Cry For." The last in a planned three-part series of 12" collaborations between the bicoastal duo, *Walking Through Fire* (Candlewax Records) takes that sound to its logical conclusion. Canned heat.

Finally, All City Records out of Ireland gives us another strong 12" release in **G-Frequency's** "Eggs & Cheese" b/w "No Control." You wouldn't necessarily know it but G-Frequency is a live band of sorts led by a double-bass player; **Tableek of Maspyke** handles mic duties while All City regulars **Heralds of Change** offer their hands on a pair of ethereal remixes. Now that's what I call *craic*.



Hip-Hop Guest Reviews: Zeph & Azeem

Hyphy not quite doing it for ya? Om Hip Hop boys Zeph & Azeem fortunately represent the new breed of Bay Area hotness. Need proof? Check out Azeem's heavily downloaded YouTube video for the hugely political "Dead White Men," shot live and acapella on the steps of San Francisco's City Hall. Then hear the fire starter and DJ Zeph on *Rise Up*, where these highly touted Oakland residents go crazy with twerked-up Eastern- and Jamaican-tinged hip-hop tunes that challenge listeners as much as bling-obsessed MCs. This month, we threw a few new tracks at the duo to see what they were feelin'. *Will Tobin*
www.myspace.com/zephandazeem

THE COOL KIDS "88"

C.A.K.E./US/12

I really don't see the '88 parallel here. These guys' lyrical subjects, although hilarious at times, would not have gone over well in '88. Entertaining, but not right-teous. "88" is all drums, other than the same distorted guitar stab heard in N.W.A.'s "Boyz-N-the-Hood." I found the production a little boring. "One Two" sounds like it would knock at the right volume. It wasn't as "throwback" as I expected, but in a good way. *Zeph*

SHAWN LOV "MILLIONS"

Nuffsaid/AUST/12

I can see why this was the first US rapper signed to this Oz label. His voice sounds real similar to folks I heard while I was there—in other words, very white. Dude sounds like a white Papoose. Every other line he says is quotable and, lyrically, he writes his ass off but music that's thought about too much sometimes doesn't come off. The beats are dope, but sound like other stuff too much, and even if the hook *is* hot as fuck, it's been done too many times. *Zeph*

LIL WAYNE "LA LA LA"

Cash Money-Universal/US/12

Wayne is a fuckin' lunatic, so most things he spits are sick. Any dude that names a mixtape *I Can't Feel My Face*, as a tribute to the quality of coke these days, is bound to raise a few eyebrows. This tribute to N'Orlans is hot. Four gunshots. *Azeem*

CONSEQUENCE "UNCLE RAHEIM"

G.O.O.D. Music/US/12

The hype on this was that the beats were all that. From what I hear, the beats are better than average, but mediocre for Kanye; the lyrics got me more. Production-wise, "Feel This Way" was disappointing, but Consequence is mad consistent on the mic, and John Legend is my favorite new male soul singer. *Zeph*

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Lucky 13
By Toph One

TophOne spins every Wednesday at the RedWine Social at Dalva and every Thursday at Silver Tits at Otis in S.F.



Architecture In Helsinki



KRS One & Marley Marl

I'm a little confused. I could be on a train headed up to Portland, or on my bike riding down to L.A. Maybe on a jet over the Atlantic bound for the Garden Festival in Zadar, Croatia, or kicking it on the lakefront in Chicago, sipping a tall boy of Old Style. Or possibly speeding between parties in Denver and Boulder. It's been that kind of summer. I decided to say "YES" a lot more this year. Yes to spontaneous fun. Yes to reckless spending. Yes to living louder and faster and just a little bit crazier. It might cost me a few gigs, and I might be a few dollars short on the rent, but I'll wager the experiences I gain will vastly outweigh the temporary setbacks I incur. Check back with me next month...

1. ARCHITECTURE IN HELSINKI "HEART IT RACES"

Polyvinyl/US/12
I've always thought A.I.H. was a pretty fun band, but nothing prepared me for this 12" from their forthcoming full-length, *Places Like This*. Is this hip-hop no-wave? I don't know what the fuck is going on here, but I like it a lot. Trizzy's Rusty Tin Can Mix might be my jam of the summer.

2. V/A ART DON'T SLEEP

Milan/US/CD
And speaking of roof parties and people who we love, there's Dru Lojero and the Art Don't Sleep crew repping leftfield L.A. from day one. Check out this dazzling compilation for a kaleidoscopic twirl down some funky back alleys, featuring Nobody, Yesterday's New Quintet, DJ Dusk, and a slew more lovely folks.

3. TROUBLEMAKER NO WINE JUST WOMEN

Hollyrock/US/CD
As you might imagine, I have a little trouble with the name here, but that's where my problems with Troublemaker end. This cat simply hits as hard and correct as they come—rocking Missy next to !!! next to Gang of Four next to E-40 next to Beck. This is what a DJ set *should* sound like.

4. TAL M. KLEIN "NEPTUNE'S MINTY TRIDENT"

Aniligital Music/US/12
Tal brings the heavy funk like it's nobody's business, and you'd be hard pressed to find anyone else out there doing it better. Well, look on the flip—it's Allgood Funk Alliance killing the dancefloor. And look for the full-length, *Plastic Starfish*, in the fall.

5. E DA BOSS "GO LEFT"

Om/US/12
E's "Go Left" was one of the gems of Om's *Hip Hop Volume One* compilation, so it's hot to get it on a 12", with the slinky "Banana Split" on the flip. Hey, I've got an idea: Let's put Troublemaker, Tal M. Klein, and E da Boss in a room together and see what happens. Now *that* would be a night!

6. MELINA JONES SWEARING OFF BUSTERS

Female Fun/US/CD
It's been a while since I've heard the Bay repped as hard and as lovely as by the blazing Melina Jones on her debut. DeeDot gets a lot of credit for absolutely slamming beats, but you've gotta hear this gal tell her tales of life in the City of St. Francis.

7. DNAE BEATS THE FIRST HUNDRED IS THE HARDEST

Machete Vox/US/CD
Young DNAE is hard at work putting his mark on the Bay Area sound, and when you realize the scope of his work so far, it's a little staggering. Here we have thunderous beats blessed by the likes of MF Grimm, Gift of Gab, Eddie K, Azeem, Pigeon John, Mr. Lif, etc. Did I mention it's mixed by DJ B.Cause?

8. DJ SUN MONDAY DRIVE EP

Alternate Take/US/12
A lovely dub-hip-hop (disco?) party slammer. I recommend two copies.

9. SR MANDRIL SR MANDRIL

Three-Sixty Records/US/CD
A good record should make you want to dance, fuck, cry, call your friends, and melt into the beach at sunset. This one's got it all, but try on "Ain't Got" for starters.

10. J.BLESS AND SEASUNZ PRESENT SOLAR STEREO

white/US/CD
If this is one of hip-hop's alternate universes, we should all go there now and consider buying a vacation house. Imagine Sa-Ra with early Hiero lyrics, and then throw a fastball 50 years into the future.

11. KRS ONE AND MARLEY MARL HIP HOP LIVES

Koch/US/CD
Are you kidding? These two former rivals are both in fine form on this long-overdue collaboration. Check the title track, "Musika," and "The Victory."

12. DJ ALIBI ONE DAY

Tres/US/CD
Nothing shoots you down like a madly talented 21-year-old doing something better than you could ever hope to do. I mean, I was listening to hip-hop before this kid was born! Damn, but check his beats! Hotness.

LUCKY 13. SPACE GALLERY

US/gallery
Ray Morrone has fashioned the perfect little spot for young art, weird music, and fun folks—in the original BPM location on Polk Street, S.F., no less! Stop in, join the party, and enjoy a little *vin rouge*.

Northern State - Can I Keep This Pen?
Pushes the limits in terms of what a hip hop song might sound like, what a rock song might sound like, and what Northern State might sound like. Out 8/28



Eyvind Kang - Atlantis
featuring Mike Patton 7/10



Circus Devils - Sgt. Disco
Side project from Robert Pollard (Guided By Voices) 7/23

COMING SOON



Qui Love's Miracle
New music from David Yow (the Jesus Lizard/Scratch Acid) Out 9/11/07

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IN THE STUDIO: CHROME0

The multi-city synth-pop duo talks vintage gear and Prince worship.
WORDS: CAMERON MACDONALD PHOTO: MARTIN LAPORTE

Chromeo could just as easily be a house party band from 1987 as 2007. The Montreal/New York duo's concoction of *Revolution*-era Prince funk, Jam-and-Lewis pop, and Jheri Curl-oiled camp is built from scratch on a wealth of vintage synthesizers and drum machines. Despite their home arsenal, the band keeps it simple on stage. Frontman Dave 1 (David Macklovitch) wields a mean Gibson Flying V guitar, while his comrade P-Thugg (Patrick Gemayel) mans the synths and robotically serenades the crowd with a Talk Box tube tucked into one cheek. *XLR8R* visited the duo at A-Trak's Montreal recording space to discuss the virtues of electronic drums and the art of Peter Dinklage-style synth-talking.

DO YOU STICK TO THE FACTORY PRESETS IN YOUR SYNTHESIZERS OR DO YOU USUALLY TWEAK THE SOUNDS ON A COMPUTER?

P-Thugg: Most of them don't have factory presets. The only ones that do are the Yamaha DX-7, the [Roland] Juno 106, and the Sequential [Circuits] 6-Trak. When I buy a synth, I just restart all of the patches and start from scratch.

Dave 1: If I come in and have a certain sound in mind, P knows that I'll never have the patience for him to run them through factory presets. What we usually do is I'll have a reference on a record I'll play him. I'll [say], "Hey, something like this." It could be something like Evelyn "Champagne" King's "I'm in Love" [*sings song's melody*]; I'll play that for him and he'll take a synth that'll approximate that sound, and then we'll personalize that afterwards.

P-Thugg: The other synthesizers, like the Moog Prodigy and the Korg Mono/Poly, [have] no presets, just buttons that you tweak and turn until you get your sound. I'm usually good at going back to whatever I have because I know which does what sound, and which oscillators to bring where.

Dave 1: Basically, P and I are in different cities a lot of the time. When I'm in my own city, I usually work on writing lyrics and coming up with melodies or song titles and basic ideas for the songs. P uses that time to be a sound technician, and he creates archives of sounds that are inspired by classic records. We study these things very closely. When it comes down to mixing the record, that's when I come a little bit more into play on the technical level. I'll pay attention to the way things are panned, the way that Prince would pan certain sounds and could create certain effects. Sometimes, you want

to do a little nudge, a little wink to those techniques. To a lot of people, our music is fun or feel-good music and it's true, there is that funny element to it and a quirky dimension. But what gives it the depth is that it comes from a really diligent study of classic records. It's the same way hip-hop producers—which we were before—would study old Bob James or Roy Ayers records.

WHAT'S THE ADVANTAGE OF USING ELECTRONIC DRUMS?

P-Thugg: A really punchy sound, and I kind of like the synthetic side of it. I don't really like live, organic drums when they're recorded. They sound flat to me.

Dave: They only sound good on [Michael Jackson's] "Billie Jean."

P-Thugg: And there's probably an [Linn] LM-1 under it anyways. They used to just run a drum machine and play over it.

Dave 1: Another thing that is cool about drum machines is that you can really detune the sounds and [make them] sound really synthetic and crazy—like Prince's famous detuned handclap... It doesn't sound like a drum anymore but it's such a beautiful sound.

WHAT'S THE ADVANTAGE THAT THE TALK BOX HAS OVER THE VOCODER?

P-Thugg: The vocoder instantly gives you a computerized voice, but the Talk Box is a bit more human. It depends on who is playing it; every Talk Box player will have a different sound even if the synth sound that's feeding it is the same. It's a very personal instrument that you have to learn.

Dave 1: We use the Talk Box, the vocoder and we use AutoTune. We love all of them.

WHAT PIECE OF GEAR ARE YOU MOST PROUD OF?

P-Thugg: Probably my Moog Prodigy. It just sounds great. [Or] the Sequential Circuits 6-Trak.

Dave 1: Our secret weapon on the first album was the cheesiest keyboard of them all [the Korg M1], but that's how we got the drums on "Needy Girl."

Chromeo's *Fancy Footwork* is out now on Vice. www.chromeo.net



In Chromeo's studio (clockwise from top left), Akai S900, Korg M1 Roland R70.



ARTIST TIPS: BUMPS

Tortoise's polyglot approach to music is grounded in the work of three percussionists—John McEntire, John Herndon, and Dan Bitney—who integrate elements of dub, funk, jazz, and numerous genres into the band's instrumental compositions. But despite the wealth of side projects they're involved in, they've never made a percussion album together... until now. After friendly prodding from Stones Throw's general manager Egon, the drummers sat down and started messing around last year at McEntire's Soma Studios in Chicago. The resulting 23 instrumental tracks on *Bumps*, the side-project's eponymous release on Stones Throw (some of which have already been fed to remixer), are a wellspring of potential breaks that showcase the creative possibilities of three drum kits. We first asked Herndon for drumming advice, and his response boiled down to, "Ask John McEntire." Wise words, as evidenced by these five tips from McEntire, a sound-engineering expert. *Patrick Sisson*

www.stonesthrow.com/bumps

EXPERIMENT WITH THE BASICS

We didn't use anything too weird, like tambourines, shakers, or whistles. As far as microphones go, I don't really have any particular insights that would be beyond the realm of what anybody else would tell you. It's all about experimentation. It all starts with the players and the instruments. You just need to tweak things to make it sound right in the room.

LOTS OF POST-PLAY

On *Bumps*, we used a lot of analog synth modules, frequency shifters, and phase shifters. There's lots of distortion and compression. You can hear all that stuff pretty clearly. We were definitely finding out new ways to distort things. We took the possibilities of the synthesizer module further, especially with the frequency shifting. One of those cuts was really interesting. We split it in stereo and ran it through two frequency shifters that drifted close to the same pitch.

SEPARATE IS NOT EQUAL

We had one kit isolated, which gave us a different palette of sounds—really dry, crunchy, and upfront. You actually have more processing possibilities with that because the resulting sounds are cleaner.

CROSSOVER HITS

It's hard to get things separated. There can be too much hi-hat bleeding into the snare mic, and sometimes you have to fight balance problems. You can do more physical isolation, like putting the hi-hat further away or adding baffling. Nowadays, you can also use a program like SoundReplacer.

ASCENDING THE THRONE

On a couple cuts we recorded in the bathroom in the studio with just one mic. It turned out really nice. I'd used it as an echo chamber for some other things before. So we went in there with a kick drum, snare drum, and hi-hat and gave it a try.



NO COMPROMISES



TRAKTOR SCRATCH is the professional DJ system built specifically for performing DJs. Built on the rock-solid TRAKTOR engine and the high-end AUDIO 8 DJ hardware unit.

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MODERN LEGACY

Korg Legacy Collection Plug-ins

MSRP: \$299; www.korgusa.com

Korg's newest addition to their acclaimed **Legacy Collection** bundles together three faithful recreations of classic hardware synths—the MS-20, the Polysix, and the all new MonoPoly. Marketing verbiage aside, the proprietary Component Modeling Technology delivers an astoundingly analog sound that is often indistinguishable from that produced by its hardware counterparts. These synths are classics—rich, chunky, nuanced, and extremely tweakable. The software versions add modern touches like extra polyphony and “onboard” effects. Korg even thought to throw in a plug-in that allows the MS-20 to be used as an effects processor for any other audio source. Looking for that analog Korg sound? Look no further. *Roger Thomasson*



FUTURE'S SO LIGHT

Denon DN-HD2500 Digital Media Player & Controller

MSRP: \$899.99; www.denondj.com

For DJs who want to travel light, the future looks bright. The **Denon DN-HD2500** eliminates the need to bring anything more than a digital storage device to the club. The HD2500 combines dual CDJ-style control surfaces, pitch control, an LCD display screen, and a 40GB hard drive that accommodates playlists created with the included Music Manager software or any USB storage device. When tested, the unit didn't accept our Mac-based iPod (PC-based Pods only!). Instead, we copied 2GB of music to a USB pen-drive, plugged in, and transferred the tracks to the device's internal drive in seconds. Finding folders and files was no sweat. Connect it to any external DJ mixer for familiar cueing and monitoring, and the onboard effects, scratching, and looping components make the bulky, somewhat pricey HD2500 comparable to Serato or Traktor setups. Still, if this is the future, I like it! *Tomas Palermo*



BOOSTER SHOT

XtremeMac Airplay Boost Wireless iPod Transmitter

MSRP: \$49.95; www.xtrememac.com

In the cluttered world of iPod add-ons you have the essential (MicroMemo digital voice recorder), the lackluster (any portable speakers) and the just plain baffling (Griffin's iKaraoke). College campus bookstores are lined with racks of these attractively packaged iPod gadgets primed for Generation Impulse Buy. Among them will surely be XtremeMac's Airplay Boost, a wireless tune transmitter that allows the user to play an iPod through any free FM channel. For those averse to buying a bulky docking station, this accessory enables any stereo tuner or boombox to play your jams. The weak antenna signal prevents cross-the-room broadcasting, but perched beside your tuner, your playlists will sound crystal clear.

Tomas Palermo



ON-TRACK

Mackie Traktion 3 Ultimate Bundle

MSRP: \$319; www.mackie.com

Every producer wants a minimal, intuitive system and Mackie's **Traktion 3 Ultimate Bundle** easily meets the user-friendly demand. Based around a single screen operation, Traktion 3 is an all-out production playground featuring top-notch effects and filters that can shape up any preset instrument, while offering multi-processor CPU support, and QuickTime video support for soundtrack geeks. But for stubborn producers up to their necks in other software apps, this affordable gem's strength is plug-in power. Equipped with a DrumCore 2GB library, Sonic Reality loops (more than 2,000), and a LinPlug RM IV Drum Addiction library with over 250 kits and endless loops, Traktion is like a ridiculous upgrade—but with the capability to hold its own. It's no Ableton or Logic, but Traktion has more potential than the majority of these pipsqueak plug-ins. *Fred Miketa*



TURN BABY TURN

Stanton T.90 USB Turntable

MSRP: \$435; www.stantondj.com

The **T.90**, Stanton's latest entry into the growing USB turntable market, does what it should: namely, combine a turntable, audio card, and phono-to-line preamp in one case. This makes digitizing your vinyl supremely easy: Select the turntable as your audio input, enable recording, and press play—no drivers required. And as a turntable, it's quality gear: torque is good, and features like Key Lock and S/PDIF digital output are welcome. While it's not quite as sturdy as the rock-solid twelve-hunnies (the frame is made of mostly plastic rather than metal)—and there are some minor annoyances (like a poorly placed power button)—the slick design, multiple outputs, and USB convenience mostly make up for it. *Evan Shamon*



AMP LIVE

Griffin Amplifi 2.1 Channel Sound System for iPod

MSRP: \$149.99; www.griffintechnology.com

Griffin has unleashed Apple's new audio nemesis. No, it's not an iPod rip-off or another adapter-esque device; it's the **Amplifi 2.1 Sound System**—and it bumps. This extremely affordable, enclosed box of sonic chaos makes the Hi-Fi look like an overpriced pile of plastic. Complete with Griffin's minimal mono-knob control (accompanied by a killer neon-blue light), a 5" woofer, a charging dock that supports all iPod models, and the mandatory remote, Amplifi is the richest addition to Griffin's growing arsenal of advanced audiophile accessories. And for those Apple geeks who cherish the company's modern look, Amplifi comes through with a sleek design that could turn any snobby interior designer's head in its direction. Rooms are about to be filled with the sound of economical hi-fi bliss. *Fred Miketa*



EAR JAM

Future Sonics Atrio Series M5

MSRP: \$199.99; www.futuresonics.com

Professional studio and stage headphones are some of the most important elements in a musician, producer, or DJ's creative process, and the lightweight **Atrio M5s** definitely get the job done. Without using armature drivers or crossover dropouts, these pinners can compete with any circumaural mammoths. Unfortunately, after you spend five minutes trying to figure out how to position the flimsy buds in your ear, it feels like a Q-Tip has had its way with your eardrum. And while you can hear vocal tones, minute sounds, and effects like a supersonic listening machine, the discomfort might not be worth it. Add to that the fact that the M5s don't produce frequencies under 150 Hz, and the relatively high price point, and it seems that traditional heavyweight headphones may still be the most logical choice for most producers and aspiring studio techs. *Fred Miketa*



IN THE ZONE

G'zOne Type-S Cell Phone

MSRP: \$199 (with Verizon contract); www.casiogzone.com

If you're the kind of person that's always treating your phone like crap—and whining when you constantly have to send it back or buy a new one—maybe the **G'zOne** is the thing for you. We don't get its name at all, but we do get its amazing features, most of which revolve around its durability and resistance to water. Tested in full water immersion (with the ports sealed), the G'zOne came through perfectly, and with its super-sturdy construction, you can knock this sucker around without a care in the world. The built-in camera's not the hottest, but voice-activated commands and dialing, and compatibility with Verizon's VZ Navigator system put the G'zOne a step above. *Derek Grey*

THRILL OF THE HUNT

Rockstar Games breathes new life into one of their most controversial series with the Adults Only **Manhunt 2**.
WORDS: RYAN RAYHILL

Kill. Or be killed. It's an extreme choice for extreme circumstances. And, at the moment, no videogame is quite as extreme as Rockstar Games' *Manhunt 2*, recently banned in the U.K. and New Zealand, and assigned the Adults Only rating in the U.S. alongside games like *Grand Theft Auto: San Andreas*.

The first *Manhunt* was released four years ago to much fanfare, confusion, and, in true Rockstar fashion, controversy. The game, modeled after such films as *BMM*, *A Clockwork Orange*, and *The Running Man*, revolved around a death-row inmate forced to sneak his way to freedom and brutally execute anyone who got in his way, all for the pleasure of a demented snuff-film Svengali who taped the whole horrifying episode. Playing out like an even more demented Chris

Cunningham video, with an amazing digital hardcore soundtrack to match, it was a reality show that thrust a spotlight on the murkiest depths of human behavior. Complaints from concerned parents, lawsuits, and commercial success followed, as did similarly themed flicks like *Saw* and *Hostel*.

Manhunt 2 presents an all-new storyline, tight, stealth-action gameplay, and, naturally, even more faces of death as the game carries down the original's gruesome path of twisted violence on the PlayStation 2, PSP, and most interestingly, the motion-sensitive Wii. *XLBBB* takes an inside look at what could be the most shocking game ever. Oh, and if we aren't back in 10 minutes, call the President.

LINE UP



DANIEL LAMB

One-time scientist and current guinea pig, the bespectacled Daniel Lamb awakens from a drug-induced stupor to find himself part of a demented government experiment to create unwitting assassins known as the Pickman

Project. (Think *Naked Gun* with fewer laughs and more shanking.) A freak electrical storm knocks out power to the facility, presenting Daniel the opportunity to escape from his frenzied captors and uncover the truth.

LEO KASPER

A highly trained government assassin thrust into captivity by the Pickman Project, Leo finds himself assisting in Daniel's escape and subsequently training him in the finer

points of murder. But aside from being a sociopathic killer, something just ain't right about old Leo.



DOCTORS PICKMAN AND WHYTE

Dr. Whyte carries out wild mind-control experiments on Daniel and his fellow test subjects at the Dixmor Hospital for the Criminally Insane as instructed by the mysterious Dr.

Pickman, head of the Pickman Project (duh). We have a feeling these guys may be due for some comeuppance.

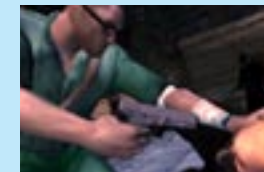


FINISH HIM

Executions are the, erm, meat of the *Manhunt* series. Here are some of the latest ways to do in your captors.

GUNS

Anyone can shoot a dude from 20 feet away. But only a true badass could sneak up on him and blow a hole through the back of his dome.



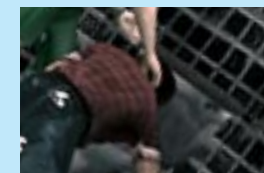
WIRE CUTTERS

In addition to removing a few very necessary vertebrae, this little devil can also relieve your hunters of their family jewels. Yowza!



ENVIRONMENT

You may not always have a weapon handy so just use whatever your surroundings present: Fry your captor's face in a fuse box or drown him in a feces-filled toilet. You know, dignified ways to meet your maker.



FUN FACTS!



The Wii version of *Manhunt 2* allows you to physically carry out the onscreen executions in your very own living room! Need to strangle a guy with a phone cord? Get those arm muscles a-twistin'!



James Urbaniak, the voice of Dr. Thaddeus Venture on Adult Swim's amazing *Venture Brothers*, has long been rumored to have a part in *Manhunt 2*.



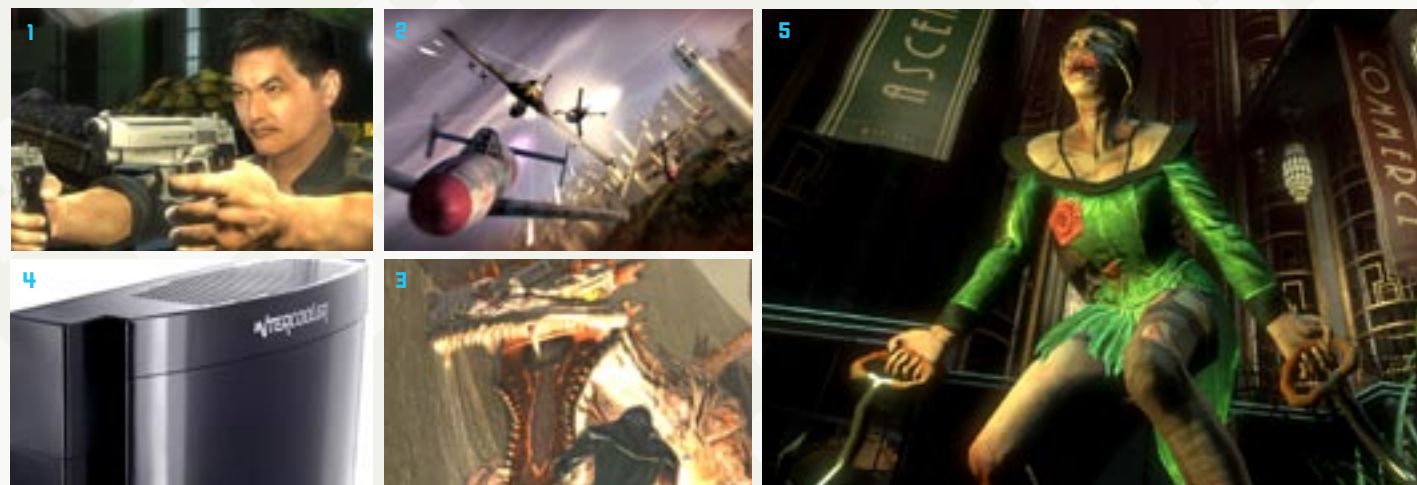
Manhunt 2 is available from Rockstar Games for use on the Wii, PlayStation 2, and PSP. www.manhunt2.com



loading...

XLR8R picks the hottest videogames and gear of the month.

WORDS: RYAN RAYHILL



One of the most anticipated games of the year—and with a new *Halo* and *GTA* on the way, that's saying a lot—*BioShock* (2K Games; Xbox 360/PC) immerses players in the underwater city of Rapture, a lavish art deco-style utopia, where everyone is either a savage mutant or dead. As beautiful as it is tense.

But if you really want tense, the galaxy's baddest bitch, bounty hunter Samus Aran, returns in *Metroid Prime 3: Corruption* (Nintendo; Wii). An almost one-year delay has drastically improved the game's controls as blasting gnarly space pirates is as easy (and accurate) as pointing and pulling the trigger. Wicked.

Giving *Oblivion* a run for its gold pieces, *Two Worlds* (South Peak; Xbox 360/PC) features a huge fantasy world full of stunning graphics and soul-consuming RPG gameplay. Of interest to '80s heads is the lush soundtrack composed by Harold Faltermeyer, the man responsible for the *Top Gun* and *Beverly Hills Cop* themes. Radical, dude.

Chow Yun-Fat returns as Inspector Tequila in *John Woo Presents Stranglehold* (Midway; Xbox 360/PlayStation 3/PC), a "sequel" to the 1992 action classic, *Hard Boiled*. Set in both Hong Kong and Chicago, *Stranglehold's* flying bullets, crumbling buildings, and arterial spray suck you into Woo's world like never before.

History Channel buffs rejoice! Again! Take to sepia-toned skies in over 50 WW II-era aircraft in *Blazing Angels 2: Secret Missions of WWII* (Ubisoft; Xbox 360/PS3/PC) and do your part to rid the world of airborne Nazi filth. 16-player online battles guarantee visceral thrills (and predictable shit-talk) at 50,000 feet.

From *Factor 5*, developer of the greatest *Star Wars* aerial combat games ever, comes... dragons? Take the reigns of a scaly steed and rain hell from above in *Lair* (Sony; PS3); using the motion-sensing SIXAXIS controller, dive-bomb invading armies and their own collection of fire breathers. Few PS3 games look as great in motion as this monster.

Perhaps the ultimate drunken party game (and there are many), *Boogie* (EA; Wii) uses the unique Wii controls to shimmy on beat to 40-plus tracks including jams from Deee-Lite and Daft Punk. A microphone for karaoke and a video editor mode further allow you to document what a talentless hack you really are.

More of an expansion than an all-new game (like anyone cares), *Guitar Hero Encore: Rocks the 80's* (Activision; PS2) has more of what matters most in life: Dio. And in addition to the diminutive metal deity, *Encore* features a wide spectrum of '80s awesomeness—30 new tracks ranging from Oingo Boingo skinny-tie rock to the crotch stuff-ery of Ratt.

But before dancing revolutions or guitar heroes there was *PaRappa the Rapper*, the paper-thin pup who yearned for hip-hop greatness on the original PlayStation. Ten years—and one De La Soul tribute—later, this PSP remake retains the original's charm while sharpening the quirky visuals and dropping in multiplayer battles to serve fools wirelessly.

Just in time for Black Temple-raiding season comes the handsome *AudioFX Pro 5+1* headset (eDimensional; PC) desi Pigned by mad modder Ben Heck. Built-in surround sound and force feedback warns when enemies approach before you lay eyes on them but—most importantly—the comfy cans coddle your ears rather than crush the bejeezus out of them.

Last year, accessory meisters Pelican introduced a line of NERF PS2 controllers that were nearly indestructible. With *NERF Armor* they give the DS Lite the cushy treatment—its colorful armor neoprene coating just begs you to chuck the li'l guy at your roommate's crotch.

While the PlayStation 3 rarely craps down due to overheating, the potential is still there for problems to arise, especially when watching Blu-ray movies. Let Nyko's *Intercooler* quell your fears with this inconspicuous five-fan attachable unit.

1. JOHN WOO'S *STRANGLEHOLD*
2. *BLAZING ANGELS 2*
3. *TWO WORLDS*
4. NYKO'S *INTERCOOLER*
5. *BIO SHOCK*

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VIS-ED: CATALINA ESTRADA

A BARCELONA-BASED ARTIST SPINS LATIN INFLUENCES AND POSITIVE VIBES INTO SWEET ILLUSTRATIONS.

WORDS VIVIAN HOST IMAGES CATALINA ESTRADA



It's half past midnight and Catalina Estrada has just strolled in the door from a long evening on the Ramblas. Long, sun-drenched days and wine-soaked nights are standard for this Barcelona-based illustrator, whose work takes life's love and light and amplifies it by thousands of watts.

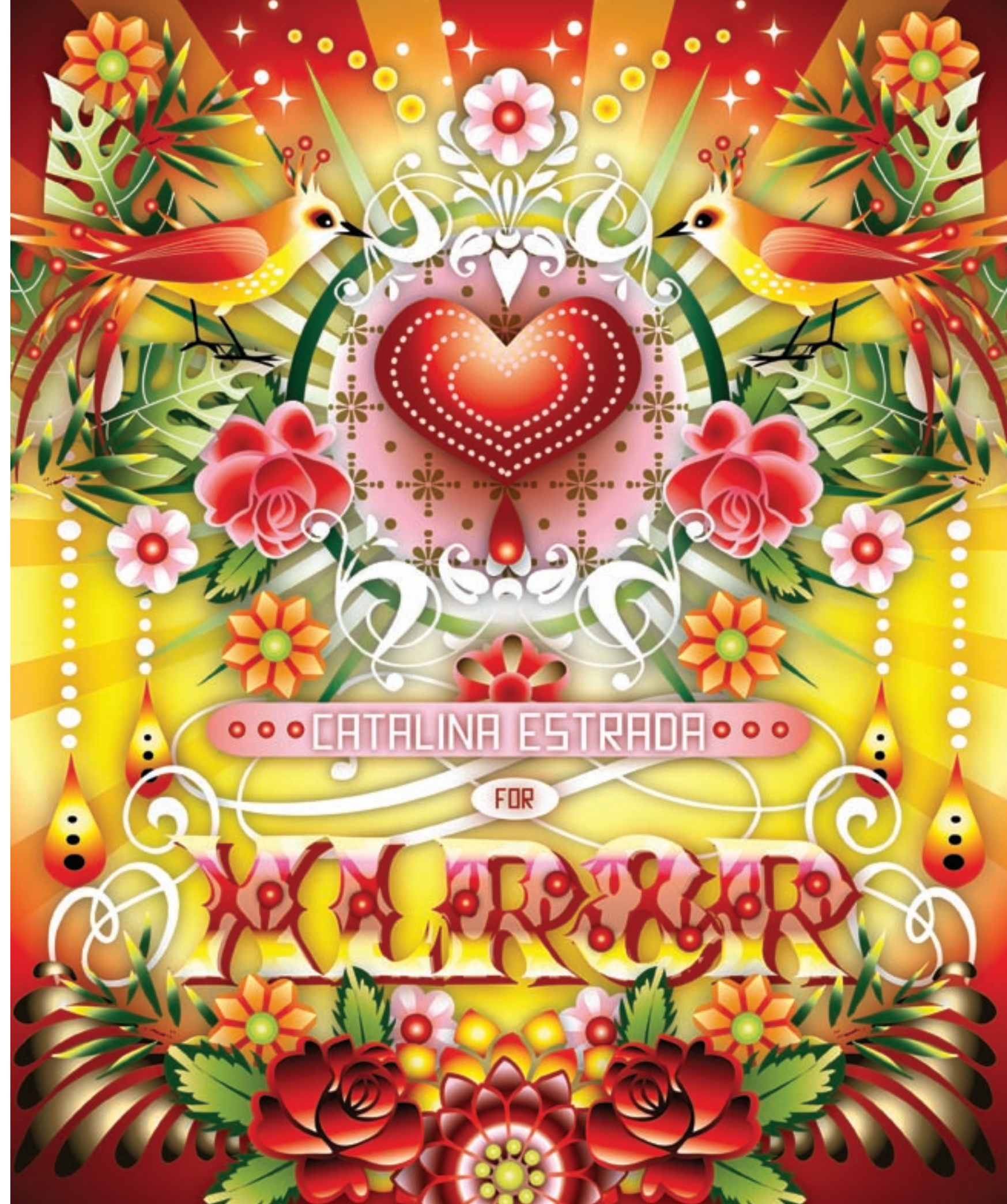
Estrada, a 32-year-old Libra, was born in Colombia, and the richness of its natural landscapes has never left her mind—the country's striking colors and vibrant flora and fauna are re-imagined in her highly symmetrical and incredibly ornate graphic worlds, where doe-eyed girls and boys (and does) nestle among candy-colored flowers, hummingbirds, and hearts.

Though satirical and nihilist attitudes are *en vogue*, Estrada isn't afraid to make things that are heartfelt and positive; she says she prefers to create dreamlike utopian escapes rather than respond to squalor and suffering as seen on the nightly news. Her eye-pleasing work has not gone unnoticed, adorning everything from Coca-Cola bottles to snowboards to clothes from Custo Barcelona and Paul Smith. We asked this consummate dreamer to tell us about inspirations from the past and the present.

www.catalinaestrada.com

ABOVE
Artwork for *Nike Air* magazine, 2006

RIGHT
Catalina Estrada exclusive for
XLR8R Vis-Ed, 2007





When did you realize you had your own style?

A few years ago I was doing volunteer work helping foundations in Colombia. I was not getting paid so it allowed me to really think of how I wanted images to look. I decided to put lots of emotion and feeling into the images and that was the point where I created my own style: using lots of colors, lots of light, vivid elements. When you're working for free, you better be sure you like what you are doing.

What are your inspirations?

I've always been very fond of religious imagery. I have been lucky to travel most of my life, and I've been collecting images of folk art from different countries. In Barcelona, the modern art museum is great, and so is the architecture—it has a lot of ornamentation and

decoration. I also like lots of Latin American artists and naïve art.

What is your greatest treasure from your travels?

I've been trying to pick up small things so I don't carry around a lot when I travel: stamps and small prints, little pieces of fabric, pieces of wallpaper and patterns from wherever. Since I was little, I've always collected wrapping papers and things like this. My grandmother collected stamps from all over the world, and it was always a great treasure to look at her albums and the art from different countries. Now, I have a box full of papers from everywhere and it's my biggest treasure.

You've recently designed a jewelry collection, Katika, with your brother Nicolas, as well as wrapping paper for Nineteen Seventy Three. What is your dream product to make?

I want to design wallpapers for interiors and houses. And you know what else? I would love to design a whole china set. That's my dream.

Do you ever get the urge to do darker stuff?

As far as a commercial graphic style, this is what clients have seen of my work and this is what they want. In my personal art, I did have darker periods and there have been these other images. You just go through different stages and you feel like painting or drawing different subjects. You feel different every day. I have some older stuff that has a lot of wolves in it; for me, they represent fear, either suffering from it or getting over it.

What was your most difficult moment as an artist?

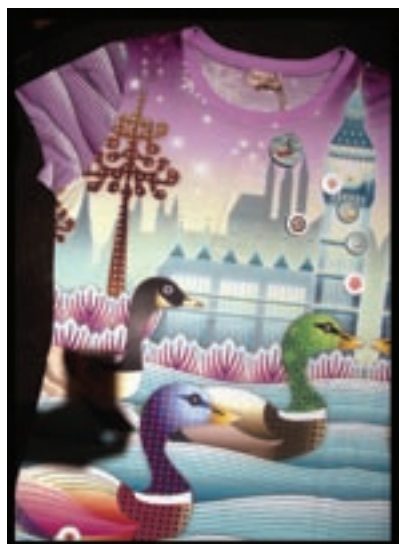
When I lived in Colombia, I wanted to create interesting projects but there was never the budget. I got out of school in 1993 and a graphic design education was not common. You could never achieve what you had in mind. Mostly, I feel very lucky and very thankful to be an illustrator. I don't see it as work so much; it mixes a lot with my art projects so I cannot tell the difference anymore.

Your husband, Pancho Tolchinsky, is a photographer. As a creative person, do you think it's important that your romantic partner be someone creative?

Absolutely. Actually, my husband is a mathematician. He's doing his doctorate in artificial intelligence. He's helped me like crazy in my work. I would have never come to this stage without him. I'm very emotional and he's more rational. He's more analytical, more calmed down. It's a good balance. He's also very critical, and I think that's been very important for me.

OPPOSITE PAGE
Cattleya, acrylic and spray paint on canvas, exhibited at the 16th Annual Swap Meet group show at Jonathan LeVine Gallery, NYC, 2007;
 Illustration for Brazilian clothing line Anunciação, spring/summer 2008 collection

ABOVE
 Watercolor and acrylic on paper, selected pieces for SWAB (Barcelona International Contemporary Art Fair), 2007



What do you listen to while you work?

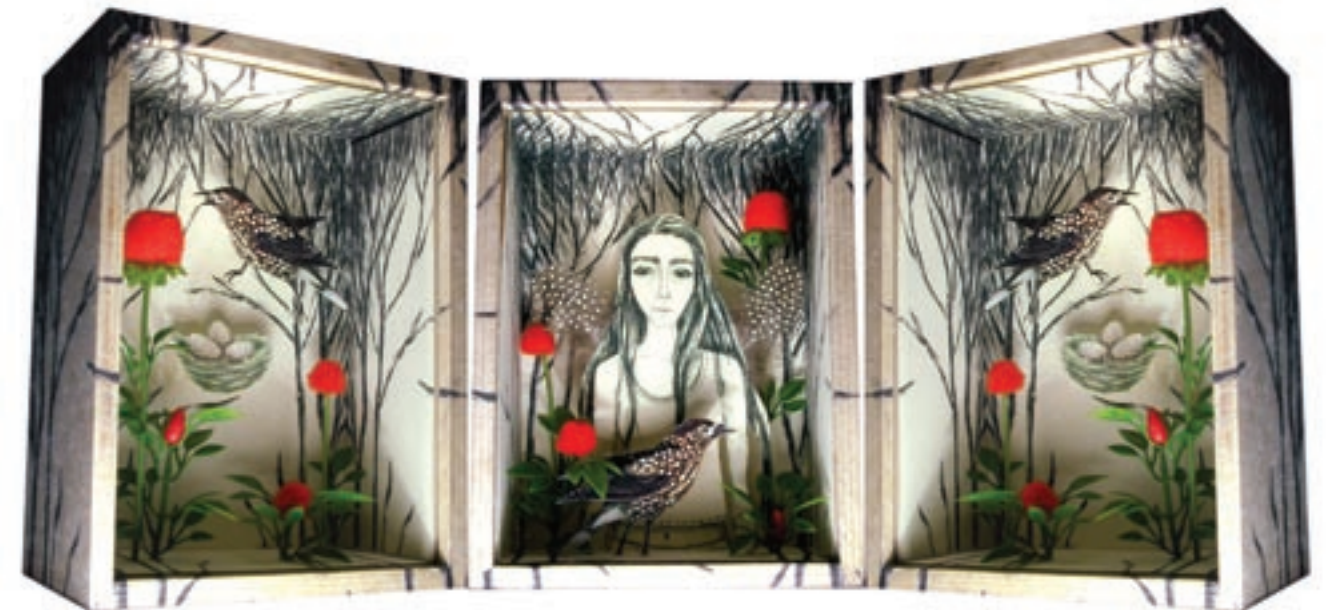
I listen to music all the time. I love M. Ward, and I just went to see Edith Piaf. The best concert I went to recently was [by San Francisco folk outfit] Vetiver. It was in a really small place and it was so beautiful. Since then, I've listened to them every day. Such a beautiful voice that guy has.

Who are your heroes?

I believe in admiring people, but I don't know about heroism –it sort of takes the human aspect out of the person. There are people in my family that I admire like crazy but I wouldn't think of them as heroes. I prefer them that way. I like to see people as human with defects and everything.

What is your favorite holiday?

The 7th of December. This is the Virgin's Day in Colombia. My grandfather had a tradition of lighting many, many candles on this day. He was kidnapped for many months and he said if he lived, he would light 2,000 candles for the Virgin Mary. He was returned on December 7th, so every year, this day was like a fairy tale for me.



Are you religious, and how much does that affect your art?

In Colombia, most people are religious. My father's family, especially, was very religious but there was a point where me and my brother just said, "That's enough." It was becoming suffocating. When you go to church, all the paintings are like torture. It's crazy that you wouldn't let your kids see a horror movie, but you'll let them see this. It's terrifying. I love the images for what they are, and they are great pieces of art, but it's crazy that from the time you are a kid, you are looking at so much suffering. As if it was just not enough looking at the news, you go to church and it's all covered with blood and suffering and tears. I prefer to go outside and see nature and take a look at beautiful things.

OPPOSITE PAGE
Duck and Bird patterns and their corresponding t-shirt and jacket for Paul Smith fall 2007 collection

ABOVE
Red Flowers (top) and *Strange Wind*, lithographs on Japanese paper on wooden boxes with glass front, 2003

WHITE NOISE

A CHAT WITH SIMON REYNOLDS, THE VETERAN MUSIC CRITIC AND JOURNALIST, ON 20 YEARS OF NOISE.

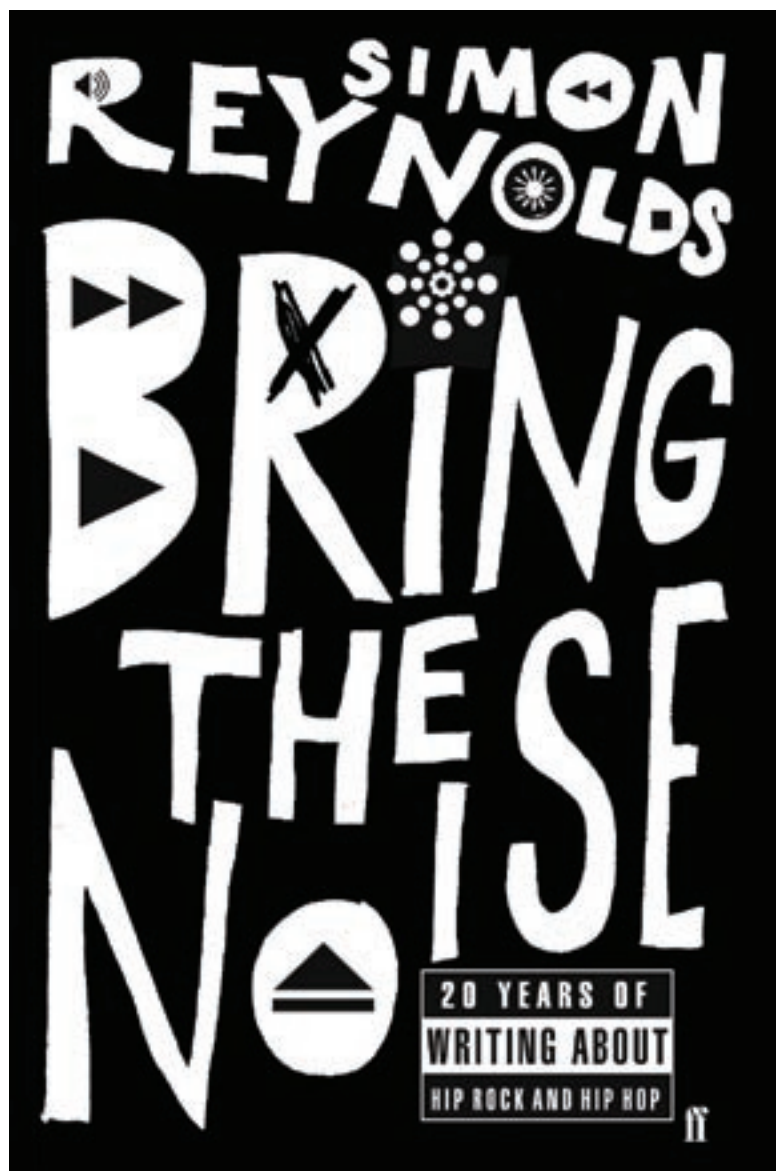
Though he's lived in Manhattan nearly 15 years, British music writer Simon Reynolds has championed UK underground sounds like grime and jungle long before we Yanks caught wind of them. Following his groundbreaking tomes on rave culture (*Generation Ecstasy*) and post-punk (*Rip It Up and Start Again*), Reynolds' latest book, *Bring the Noise*, collects 20 years' worth of his journalism and criticism, focusing on the relationship between white alternative rock and black street music.

Why does *Bring the Noise* focus on the relationship between white underground rock and black street music?

Well, it's probably the single most important motor of change in rock history... to the point where rock history wouldn't have even *happened* without these white-on-black relations of fascination/projection/appropriation/mutation/etc. But if it has been the motor of change, then right now that engine is sputtering. Hip-hop is where the problems start... You have figures like The Beastie Boys and, more recently, The Streets, but just looking at *The White Rapper Show* from earlier this year, you can see how difficult it's been for whites to take on hip-hop and take it anywhere new. If they just copy it, they're redundant; if they white-ify it, then it's no longer accepted as hip-hop.

Is electronic dance music a bridge between those two worlds?

I thought it was. Especially jungle—this wasn't the reason I was so into it, but certainly one of the many things in its favor was that it seemed to be a totally multicultural youth subculture and perhaps heralded a new post-racial Britishness (which did blossom later with 2-step garage).



You argue that indie rock and hip-hop seemed to have reached a deadlock.

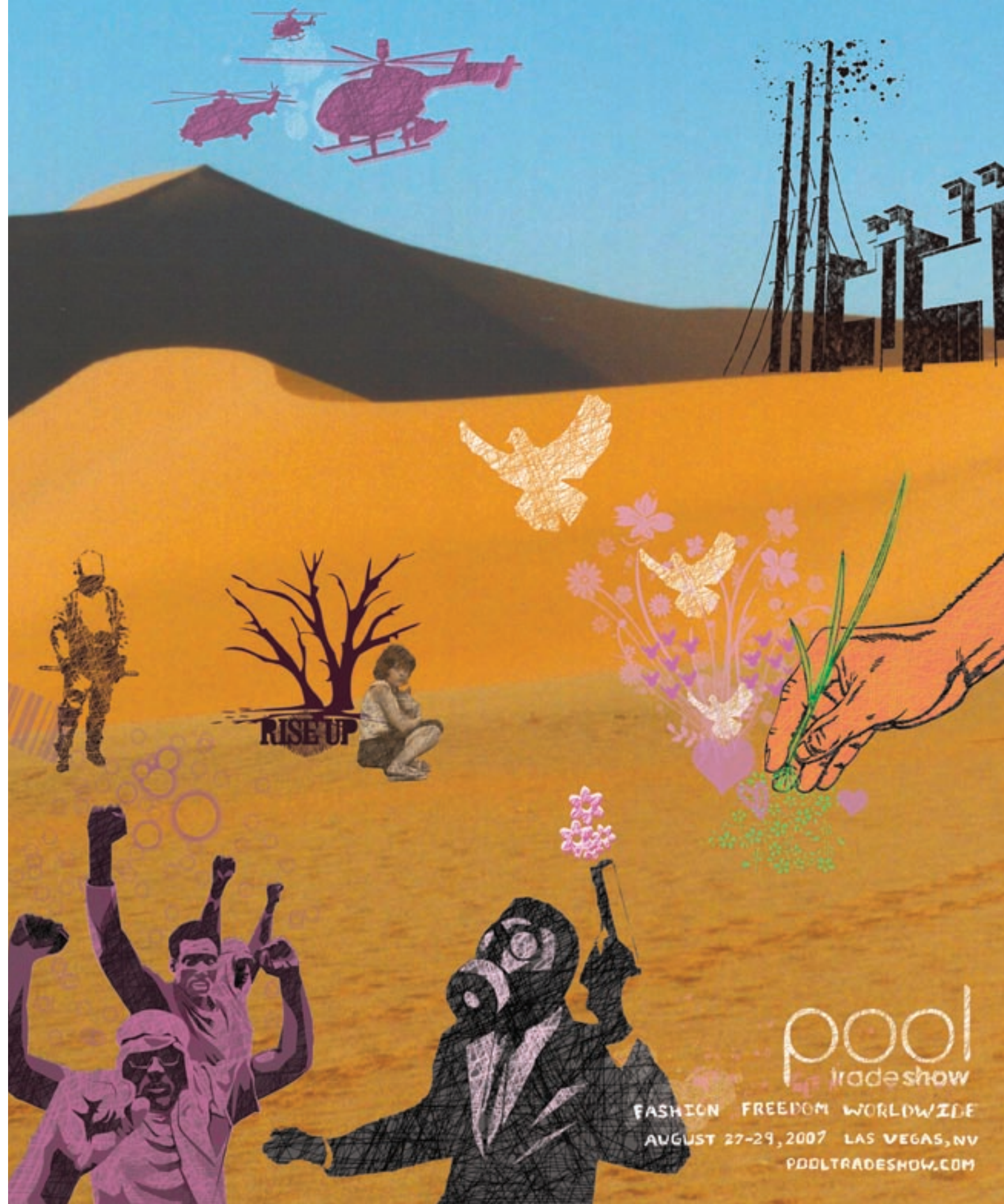
Indie rock has been rearranging the same stale shards of archival sound into slightly fresh mosaics for almost as long as I can remember. Really, it goes back to where *Rip It Up* winds up—the back-to-the-'60s move made by alternative rock in the mid-'80s. There's been various bands that pushed the envelope—Sonic Youth, My Bloody Valentine and, most recently, Animal Collective—but the bulk of it has been doing this retro-recombinant thing. Hip-hop just seems to have run out of ideas. Sonically and lyrically, it's like a treadmill at the moment. Who was the last truly original persona to emerge in rap? People go on about Lil Wayne, and he's great, but he put out his debut album in 1999!

In a recent interview, you mentioned the possibility that "it's not a specific genre but (it's) music as a whole that has ceased to be at the driving center of the culture." Why?

[It's] just a palpable absence of vibe, of a sense that it's the place to be. You can feel it in the writing about music; there's this air of inconsequentiality, a lack of conviction. No one is making big claims for anything. There seems to be more buzz, more energized chatter, in other areas of culture like art. The fact that Bob Dylan and Paul McCartney have to break bread—or biscotti—with Starbucks in order to shift their new albums just seems to be humiliating for all of us involved in this music thing! Simon Reynolds' *Bring the Noise* is available in the UK from Faber and Faber.

www.faber.co.uk, www.blissout.blogspot.com

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Junior Sanchez

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Torq software



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